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THE VENETIAN INQUISITION AND ASPECTS OF “OTHERNESS”:
JUDAIZERS, MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN CONVERTS
(16TH – 17TH CENTURY)

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Abstract

The Thesis explores the Venetian Inquisition's handling of cases involving crypto-Jewish, crypto-Muslim practices, and some cases where people had lapsed into Islamic ways, especially when in remoter parts of the Venetian empire or within the Ottoman empire and who sought reconciliation with the Catholic Church. Despite their differences, the offences involved the practice of dissimulation and connected with Venice's position as a transit city, since for most offenders Venice was one among their various destinations in their peregrinations in the Mediterranean.

The Thesis draws on the printed transcripts of cases involving Judaism, but also unpublished archival material in both the State archive, and the Patriarchal archive. The discussion, with close textual analysis focuses on the lengthy testimonies given before the Inquisition by a variety of people, who appeared as accusers and witnesses, and examines what they perceived as alleged crypto-Jewish and crypto-Muslim practices in the atmosphere of growing concern about religious deviance in late Renaissance Venice. It analyses the tribunal's approach to the accusations and offences, and changing patterns of practice, paying close attention to the Inquisitors' questioning strategies. As most offenders had undergone conversion, this Thesis analyses how they fashioned their identity in front of the Inquisitors who, on the basis of Church and State regulations, insisted on unambiguous religious identities. The Thesis delineates the convergences and divergences in the handling of these offences, and challenges some perceptions of power relations between accusers and accused.

While following these investigations, much is revealed about communities in cosmopolitan Venice, their locations and inter-actions, and how Christian and non-Christians perceived, and mis-perceived, each other. Insights are also provided into movements of individuals – as for commercial or mercenary military purposes – in and between remoter parts of the Venetian empire and the Ottoman empire.

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Note on Footnotes, Quotations and Spelling

All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. The original quotations have been included in the footnotes for the sake of preserving the flavour of the depositions and interrogations, and for further insights into the atmosphere of trials.

Proper names in *processi* transcripts published in *Processi del Sant'Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudazzanti* have been standardised according to the version given by P. C. Ioly Zorattini in the Index of each volume or in total in the Index of names of the fourteenth volume (for instance, the name Duarte Gomez is used instead of Odoardo, Odoardus etc Gomes, originally appearing on the document).

In quotations from source material all Latin or Italian abbreviations have been developed and I have standardised the spelling of proper names to some extent; Latinised names are turned to the Italian (for instance, Girolamo instead of Hieronymo). Venetian versions of proper names are usually turned to the proper Italian (Zorzi to Giorgio, for instance). I have maintained the Italian – Venetian spelling of geographical terms for places belonging to Venice's Mediterranean territories (for instance, Spalato instead of Split). The current non-Italian version is given in brackets.

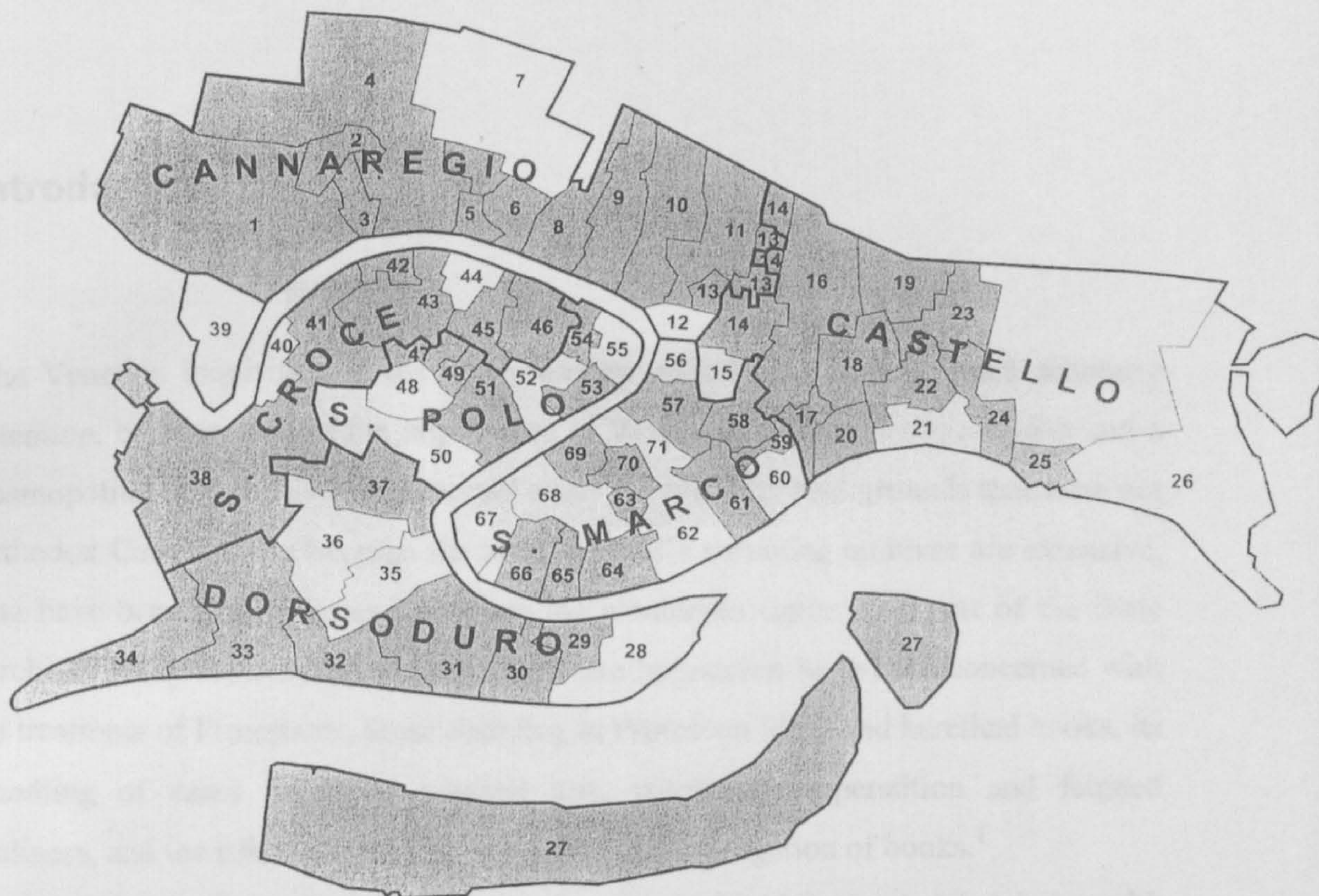
In fascicoli of Inquisition *processi* from the State Archive the folios are often unpaginated or loose; for long trials references are given by the name of the person under interrogation and the appropriate date. Inquisition *processi* hosted in the Archivio della Curia Patriarchale are paginated.

Although in Venice the calendar initiated the new year on 1 March, the Holy Office used the modern calendar.

Abbreviations

ACPV	Archivio della Curia Patriarcale di Venezia
ASV	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
BdC	Battesimi dei Catecumeni
B 1590 – 1594	Battesimi principia 1590 3 Marzo finisce 1594 ultimo Marzo
B 1616 – 1675	Battesimi principia il di 29 Agosto 1616 Termina col 20 Ottobre 1675
BMI	Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venezia
CSI	Criminalia Sanctae Inquisitionis
SU	Sant’Uffizio
b.	busta
den.	denunciation by
proc.	processo
test.	testimony of
u. d.	unfoliated document
Processi	P. C. Ioly Zorattini, ed. <i>Processi del S. Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudaizzanti</i> . 14 vols. Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1980 – 1999

The Parishes of Venice (end of the sixteenth century)



CANNAREGIO

1. S. Geremia
2. Ghetto
3. S. Leonardo
4. S. Marcuola
5. S. Maria Maddalena
6. S. Fosca
7. S. Marcilian
8. S. Felice
9. S. Sofia
10. SS. Apostoli
11. S. Canciano
12. S. Giovanni Crisostomo
13. S. Maria Nova

CASTELLO

14. S. Marina
15. S. Lio
16. S. Maria Formosa
17. S. Giovanni Novo
18. S. Severo
19. S. Giustina
20. S. Provolo
21. S. Giovanni in Bragora
22. S. Antonin
23. S. Ternità
24. S. Martino
25. S. Biagio
26. S. Pietro di Castello

DORSODURO

27. S. Eufemia
28. S. Gregorio
29. S. Vio
30. S. Agnese
31. S. Trovaso
32. S. Basegio
33. S. Anzolo Raffael
34. S. Nicolò
35. S. Barnaba
36. S. Margherita
37. S. Pantalon

S. CROCE

38. S. Croce
39. S. Lucia
40. S. Simeon Piccolo
41. S. Simeon Grande
42. S. Zuan Degolà
43. S. Giacomo dall' Orio
44. S. Stae
45. S. Maria Mater Domini
46. S. Cassiano

S. POLO

47. S. Boldo
48. S. Stin
49. S. Agostin
50. S. Tomà
51. S. Polo
52. S. Aponal
53. S. Silvestro
54. S. Mattio

55. S. Giovanni
Elemosinario

S. MARCO

56. S. Bartolomio
57. S. Salvador
58. S. Zulian
59. S. Basso
60. S. Marco
61. S. Giminian
62. S. Moisè
63. S. Fantin

64. S. Maria Zobenigo
65. S. Maurizio
66. S. Vidal
67. S. Samuele
68. S. Angelo
69. S. Beneto
70. S. Paternian
71. S. Luca

Introduction

The Venetian Inquisition in the early modern period has received much scholarly attention, both because of the importance of Venice as a commercial *entrepôt* and a cosmopolitan Republic which attracted many people from backgrounds that were not orthodox Catholic, and because the local tribunal's surviving archives are extensive, and have been readily accessible since the nineteenth century, as part of the State Archive. Many studies involving the Venetian Inquisition have been concerned with its treatment of Protestants, those dabbling in Protestant ideas and heretical books, its handling of cases involving magical arts, witchcraft, superstition and feigned holiness, and the tribunal's role in censorship and expurgation of books.¹

Other books and articles have been concerned with suspected Judaizers: with people who had been converted from Judaism to Christianity, often forcibly when in Iberia, and who subsequently in Venice and Venetian territories reverted in whole or in part to Jewish practices and beliefs; or with a few born and bred Christians who were tempted by Judaic beliefs and practices, and associated with Jews. In a series of articles and a monograph Brian Pullan has provided a lucid and thorough analysis of the Inquisition's policy on Jews and Judaizers in close relation to Venice's position in the European scene and changing attitudes and relations with Rome, the Emperor and the Ottoman Empire. Also, he has highlighted the ways Venice's trade position in the Mediterranean and attitudes towards money-lending in the city underlined the government's concern about Jews and the Inquisition. Attitudes towards the conversion of Jews, and especially the policy of the House of Converts, have a

¹ J. J. Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies. Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City*, paperback edn (Baltimore and London, 2003); R. Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice 1550 – 1650* (Oxford, 1989); G. Ruggiero, *Binding Passions. Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York and Oxford, 1993); Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints. Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice* (Baltimore and London, 2001); P. F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540 – 1605* (Princeton, N.J., 1977).

prominent place in his work. Furthermore, Pullan has employed Inquisition material in constructing biographical accounts for Judaizers, particularly in view of dominant generalisations on the nature of Iberian crypto-Judaism, and Jewish converts to Christianity.² His work was a valuable contribution not only to the history of the Venetian Inquisition and the Jews but also to the wider scene of the Jewish presence in Venice, supplementing considerably Cecil Roth's work on the Jews.³ Pullan's work was based on Inquisition material, some of which is also used in my Thesis, now available in P. C. Ioly Zorattini's monumental work (Pullan used the first two volumes of the series then available).

Instead of providing further insights in the structure of the Venetian Inquisition and by extension its position in the Venetian ecclesiastical and political scene and offering additional information on Jews and Judaizers, my Thesis deals with the Inquisition as a disciplinary apparatus which, apart from inflicting sentences, it articulated certain discourses through which it sought to perceive, categorise and hierarchize religious deviance. However, since the "game" of perception and classification was played not only in the institution but also by the persons who approached the Inquisition as accusers and witnesses, the Thesis deals with the reciprocal relation between the institution and its dominant actors. My study diverges from previous scholarship at another main point. In the tradition of Roman Inquisition studies, initiated by Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms*,⁴ Inquisition documents have been mainly used for discerning the voice (the life and beliefs) of the accused persons. In this view, Pullan's work has focused on reconstructing the lives of the accused Jews and Judaizers. In this endeavour, even implicitly, it is assumed that the accused persons had fixed identities, which through a proper reading of trials, sometimes in combination with extra-judicial records, can

² B. Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550 – 1670* (Oxford, 1983); idem, "'A Ship with Two Rudders': 'Righetto Marrano' and the Inquisition in Venice", *The Historical Journal*, 20, 1 (1977): 25-58; idem, "The Inquisition and the Jews of Venice: The Case of Gaspare Ribeiro, 1580-1581", *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library*, 62 (1979): 207-31; idem, "The Conversion of the Jews: The Style of Italy", *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library*, 70 (1988): 53-70. Reprinted in his *Poverty and Charity. Europe, Italy, Venice, 1400-1700* (Aldershot, 1994); idem, "La nuova filantropia nella Venezia cinquecentesca", in *Nel regno dei poveri. Arte e storia dei grandi ospedali veneziani in età moderna (1474-1797)*, ed. B. Aikema and D. Meijers (Venice, 1989); more detailed biographical accounts are found in Ioly Zorattini's introduction to each volume of his *Processi del S. Uffizio di Venezia contro ebrei e giudaizzanti*.

³ C. Roth, *History of the Jews of Venice* (New York, 1975) (1st published 1930).

⁴ C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. J. and A. Tedeschi (London, 1980).

be retrieved. To a hypothetical question whether the voices of the accused can be discerned my Thesis replies maybe, depending on the case,⁵ and argues that apart from “real” identities, identities are also objects of construction and negotiation, especially when disciplinary mechanisms are involved. As Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero have aptly argued, “criminal records can never be simple windows into the past, rather they are highly crafted images fashioned in accord with legal procedures, statutes, precedents, and the cultural and power dynamics of the past”.⁶ In this view, my purpose is to address the voice of the tribunal and witnesses (instead of using the witnesses’ accounts for the information they provide for the accused person’s life) in the form of an elementary discourse (just as the discourse on the pretense of holiness has been analysed by Anne Jacobson Schutte)⁷ and also the voice of the accused as a (counter-) discourse to the workings of the Inquisition. Last but not least, addressing the discursive dimension of the trials, the Thesis uses the *verbali* (the transcripts of the oral exchange) in a substantially more extensive way than Pullan did, and this is done from a particular microanalytical viewpoint and technique.⁸

This Thesis is dealing with Judaizers, but from new viewpoints and with different analytical approaches; it also discusses the much less studied problems of Muslims, Muslim converts, and Christian admirers of the Muslim faith. It is also concerned with some people in the more distant Venetian territories or from the Ottoman Empire, Orthodox and Muslim, who approached the Inquisition to secure acceptance as “good” Roman Catholics.

The Thesis utilises the largely neglected testimonies of accusers and witnesses and offers new insights into how Christians of different status, social position and origin perceived (with whatever distortions) the beliefs and practices of alleged crypto-Jews and crypto-Muslims, and at the same time they projected aspects of fashioning of religious identities in the atmosphere of growing concern about

⁵ As for instance, when the accused person appears to have been particularly outspoken. This is quite true for the case of Ginzburg’s Domenico Scandella or, in a recent article by Mary Laven, for the nun Laura Querini who appeared before the Venetian magistracy of the *Provveditori sopra Monasteri* in 1614: M. Laven, “Testifying to the Self: Nun’s Narratives in Early Modern Venice”, in *The Trial in History*, vol. 1, *Judicial Tribunals in England and Europe 1200-1700*, ed. M. Mulholland and B. Pullan (Manchester, 2003), 147-58.

⁶ E. Muir and G. Ruggiero, “Introduction: The Crime of History”, in *History from Crime*, ed E. Muir and G. Ruggiero, trans. C. B. Curry, M. A. Gallucci and M. M. Gallucci (Baltimore and London, 1994), x.

⁷ Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints*, xi, 137.

⁸ See below, xxxi-xliv.

religious deviance. My analysis elucidates the way the suspicion of religious deviance shaped human relations and the mechanisms developed for curbing heresy in the Venetian parishes and neighbourhoods. On a wider front, the Thesis aims to map how rumours, perceptions and concern about crypto-Jewish and crypto-Muslim practices inserted and were reflected on Venice's urban fabric.

At another level, with a close textual analysis of key cases of Iberian crypto-Judaism and crypto-Muslim practices the Thesis focuses on the Inquisitor's interrogation of suspects and provides some important insights into court interchange by demonstrating that the tribunal's discourse, practice and approach were far from fixed, but through a learning process, the Inquisitors gradually established and shaped their perception of crypto-Jewish and crypto-Muslim dissimulation. Points of divergence and convergence are revealed with reference to the Inquisitors' learning process and approach in encountering another offence which also involved apostasy and dissimulation, that is, Christians' conversion to Islam who later sought to return to Catholicism. Aspects of the Inquisition's discourse and practice are linked and examined in the light of wider developments in the inquisitorial activity as reflected in some influential seventeenth-century manuals and instructions on the correct procedure.

With the Inquisitors on a learning process, the Thesis illustrates the strategies of religious identity self-fashioning employed in their depositions by accused crypto-Jews and crypto-Muslims, who took advantage of possible leeway in the interrogation and the tribunal's approach and sought to manipulate the procedure. Tactical depositions become more apparent in the way Christian converts to Islam wove their narratives before the Inquisition. In this context, the Thesis suggests that defendants were not merely passive under the tribunal's procedure, and challenges some views about power relations within courts.

Through Inquisition material, the Thesis provides a fresh interpretation and challenges some prevailing views on the traffic, presence, identity and relations of groups of Levantines, Christians and Muslims, who reached Venice as refugees, labourers and merchants from Venetian colonies and ex-colonies and the Ottoman Empire. The Thesis suggests that instead of viewing these groups in isolation, the notion of Levantines is a meaningful unit of approach as it encompasses the diversity

of the Levantines' religious identities, which were less fixed, than has generally been assumed, and the points of convergence between different groups.⁹

A thorough discussion on native-born Muslims and Christian converts to Islam who approached the *Pia Casa dei Catecumeni* and the Inquisition to become Catholics offers glimpses into the mercenaries' bands employed in the Venetian army. On a wider front, it challenges some views on the process of conversion in the early modern Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean by elucidating aspects of convergence in the social and cultural identities, and illustrates the mobility of some Muslim and Christian subaltern groups beyond the Christian – Muslim conflict.

Before outlining the structure of the main chapters of this Thesis, I will explain the nature of the Venetian tribunal, and some procedural aspects (and their problems), as most pertinent to my main studies. It may also help to have some comments about the Venetian Ghettos, with which many of those appearing before the Inquisition had greater or lesser contact. Then, I will highlight some aspects of the concept of Otherness and some methodological issues.

⁹ I use the term "Levantine" to encompass different religious groups and points of convergence between them. This term allows us to see these groups more as a unit, and to avoid terms such as "Turchi", "Greci", "Schiavoni", which in modern historiography have been often used as denoting ethnic or even proto-national identities. In the early modern context these terms often denoted religious adherence, with "Turchi" standing for Muslims and "Greci" for Orthodox communicants, whereas "Schiavoni" was a rather ambiguous word both in terms of ethnic and religious affiliation. The eastern Mediterranean areas under Venetian or Ottoman rule appeared in ambiguous terms in contemporary language. However, it was the nunzio Alberto Bolognetti's *Relazione Generale* which devoted a whole chapter to the Christian Churches of the Levant both under Venetian or Ottoman rule. For him the Christians of the Levant were roughly scattered from Corfu to the Black Sea, Central Anatolia and the Middle East: A. Stella, *Chiesa e stato nelle relazioni dei nunzi pontifici a Venezia. Ricerche sul giurisdizionalismo veneziano dal XVI al XVIII secolo* (Vatican City, 1964), 295-96. That the areas which Bolognetti referred to as the Levant were also inhabited by Muslims obviously indicates that the term "Levantine" was used to describe both Christians and Muslims (the Venetian state also applied the term to Jews from the Ottoman Empire). Parts of the Balkans (in the modern sense of the word) are also included in Bolognetti's Levant. It should be noted here that before the mid-nineteenth century and the emergence and gradual standardization of the term Balkans, designations such as "European Levant" were common: M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York and Oxford, 1997), 27. Moreover, even in the eighteenth century, when Venetian imperial discourse on its Balkan possessions began to be articulated in the typical manner of the Enlightenment civilizing "mission", no clear classification was achieved apart from the generic Dalmatia, with overlapping labels, such as "Slavi Croati" and "Greek Serbian", especially when religious identities were concerned: L. Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs. The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford, 2001), 331. But for the sake of clarity, in the cases where people from the Balkans (especially from the Venetian coastal area in Dalmatia and Albania, or from the Central Balkans) were involved, I have opted for the term "Balkan". However, judging by the articles collected in the volume *Venezia e il Levante*, the term "Levante" encompassed the Venetian colonies in the Balkans and the Ottoman Central and Eastern Balkans: A. Pertusi, ed., *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, 2 vols. (Florence, 1973-4).

The Venetian Inquisition: Organisation and Procedure

In 1547 the Venetian government decreed the introduction of the reorganised tribunal of the Inquisition to the city. Earlier in 1542, by the Bull *Licet ab initio* Paul III had established the Roman Congregation of the Holy Office to control the threat of reform ideas in Italy. In the interim, negotiations on the Inquisition were held, as Venice, considering the international affairs, sought a balancing and cautious policy towards the papacy, a trade and territorial rival. But political considerations after the defeat of the Schmalkaldic League led the Venetian government to side with Rome by establishing the Inquisition.¹⁰

However, beyond concerns about the international scene, the Venetian authorities were also convinced that religious dissent posed a threat to the city's social order.¹¹ Even before the Inquisition's establishment, the Council of Ten, the standing committee of public safety, had taken action to suppress heresy in the city and its dependant territories.¹² It is noteworthy that in the first half of the sixteenth century the Venetian authorities appeared to have been particularly concerned about issues of public morality and order.¹³ During the war of the League of Cambrai, as Jews from the mainland [*Terraferma*] found refuge in Venice, the authorities, anxious about the Jews' uncontrolled presence in the city decided their segregation in the newly-established Ghetto.¹⁴ In 1537, the Council of Ten established a special magistracy, the *Esecutori contro la bestemmia* to "extirpate blasphemers"; earlier in the same year the Venetian colonies of Corfu, Napoli di Romania and Malvasia had been besieged by the Ottomans. Even before the Esecutori's institution, the Council of Ten had introduced several laws against blasphemy.¹⁵ Also, in 1539, the Council

¹⁰ The international background is outlined in Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 25 – 42.

¹¹ Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, 53 – 5.

¹² A. del Col, "Organizzazione, composizione e giurisdizione dei tribunali dell'Inquisizione romana nella repubblica di Venezia (1500 – 1550)", *Critica storica*, 25 (1988): 279 – 94; idem, "L'Inquisizione romana e il potere politico nella repubblica di Venezia (1540 – 1560)", *Critica storica*, 28 (1991): 221, 230.

¹³ F. Gilbert, "Venice in the Crisis of the League of Cambrai", in *Renaissance Venice*, ed. J. R. Hale (London, 1973), 277 – 86.

¹⁴ On the Ghetto, xxvi – xxxi.

¹⁵ G. Cozzi, "Religione, moralità e giustizia a Venezia: Vicende della magistratura degli Esecutori contro la bestemmia (secoli XVI – XVII)", *Ateneo Veneto*, 29 (1991): 13 – 23; in this context of morality, homosexuality was a grave concern for the Council of Ten, which in the late fifteenth

of Ten instituted another magistracy, which later took the name the *Inquisitori di stato*, responsible for the protections of state secrets.¹⁶ Evidently, in those years, the preoccupied Venetian ruling elite favoured a centralisation of power and responsibilities in the hands of the powerful Council of Ten and its satellite magistracies.¹⁷

By the 1547 decree the Venetian government established a magistracy of three nobles, “discreet and Catholic men”, called the *Tre Savii sopra Eresia* or the *Assistenti* who would cooperate with an Inquisitor, the papal nuncio and the Patriarch of Venice in suppressing heretical activity in the city.¹⁸ As its composition indicates, the Inquisition tribunal combined Venetian and Roman elements. The three lay deputies were expected to attend the interrogations of witnesses and defendants but they did not act as judges and they were not authorised to pronounce sentences; only the three ecclesiastics had decisive votes.¹⁹ The deputies invested the Inquisition with the state’s sovereignty, as they represented the Council of Ten, they gave permission for arrests and they were the Venetian authorities’ eye over the proceedings, although this did not necessarily mean that they had a restraining role in the Inquisition’s activity.²⁰ On the other hand, Roman authority was represented by the nuncio and the Inquisitor. However, the Venetian state often sought to exercise its influence on the Inquisitors by urging the appointment of Venetian subjects to the office or by accommodating an Inquisitor’s future aspirations for a bishopric in the Venetian Republic. Finally, the Patriarch who represented the diocesan authority was a

century adopted a harsher stance through legislation and prosecution: G. Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros. Sex, Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1985), 109 – 45.

¹⁶ P. Preto, *I servizi segreti di Venezia. Spionaggio e controspionaggio al tempo della Serenissima. Cifranti, intercettazioni, delazioni, tra mito e realtà* (Milan, 1994), 55 – 70.

¹⁷ G. Cozzi, “Authority and the Law in Renaissance Venice”, in Hale, *Renaissance Venice*, 303 – 8, 317 – 18, 333 – 34.

¹⁸ Part of the decree is published in Grendler, “The *Tre Savii sopra Eresia* 1547 – 1605. A Prosopographical Study”, *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., 3 (1979): 283 – 84; three nobles also served in the medieval Venetian Inquisition which was formed in the thirteenth century. Little is known about this institution. Most information comes from Paolo Sarpi’s writings in the early seventeenth century as consultor of the Venetian government during the controversies with Rome. However, as it has been shown, Sarpi presented a distorted picture of the Venetian tribunal’s authority and jurisdiction: Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 35 – 6; Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 23 – 5; N. S. Davidson, “Rome and the Venetian Inquisition in the Sixteenth Century”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 39, 1 (1988): 16 – 36. Before the establishment of the Inquisition in 1547, the medieval tribunal was almost inactive. Few investigations exist, dealing mainly with magical arts, ACPV, CSI, b. 1 (1461 – 1558).

¹⁹ This is evident in the pronouncement of sentences, which were issued in the name of the clerical members, whereas the lay deputies were cited for their assistance in the proceedings. See for instance the sentence on António Schiaves Rodriguez, Processi (1587 – 1598), 170 – 73; on the case see, 9, 46, 123.

²⁰ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 40 – 2.

Venetian patrician. The Inquisition also comprised some lesser officials such as the auditor-general of the nuncio, the Inquisitor's deputy, called vicar or *commisario*, a fiscal, the notaries and bailiffs, who belonged to the Council of Ten. The nuncio and the Patriarch might send deputies to tribunal sessions.

Inquisition investigations usually opened with a denunciation.²¹ Preliminary investigation was followed by interrogating witnesses. If the tribunal considered that sufficient evidence existed it ordered the arrest of the accused. Depending on the suspect's reaction one or more interrogation sessions might have taken place. In the meantime examination of additional witnesses might have been conducted. Normally the Inquisitor opened the interrogation of the accused asking whether they were aware of the reason for their arrest. Before the interrogation the defendant was required to take an oath.²² Rarely did the Inquisitor reveal the accusation. The Inquisitor was mindful of the tribunal being used for personal enmity and accused persons were routinely asked whether they had any "mortal enemies".²³ Obstinate defendants or those who repeatedly gave contradictory testimonies might have been threatened with torture, although in practice torture was rarely employed.²⁴ Unless the investigation was dropped, towards the end of the suspect's interrogation the Inquisition, after revealing the nature of the accusation and announcing that guilt had been established, asked the defendants whether they wished a defence advocate to be appointed. Some defendants did employ advocates, whereas others thought it better to show repentance by submitting themselves to the tribunal's mercy. The defence advocate and defendant were provided with an edited copy of the *processo* with the names of witnesses concealed. The advocate compiled lists of witnesses and articles

²¹ I am giving a rough description of the Inquisition's operation, which is based on my reading of cases from the sixteenth and seventeenth century involving various offences beyond these that are analysed in the subsequent chapters; the base of the Inquisition's operation was the inquisitorial procedure developed in ecclesiastical courts of the thirteenth century, later spread to the secular tribunals of continental Europe and codified with the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* in 1532. For an overview of the procedure, J. Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance. England, Germany, France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974).

²² On the Inquisition's policy on the defendants' oath and its significance in delineating religious identities, 105, 184 – 85.

²³ In two cases of alleged judaizing, the defendants Duarte Dies (1578) and Giovanni Battista Bonaventura (1632), both former Jews, succeeded in convincing the tribunal that the accusations were motivated by personal hatred: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 106 – 8.

²⁴ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 54 – 6; three suspects of judaizing and five of witchcraft involving abuse of holy oil and consecrated host underwent torture during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 133 – 34; Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 178; the use of torture was carefully defined in the tribunals of the Roman Inquisition, J. Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy. Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, N.Y. 1991), 141 – 47.

[*articoli*] supporting the defendant's innocence, which witnesses had to be examined on. By summoning the defence witnesses, the Inquisition initiated the *processo ripetitivo*. Depending on the tribunal's stance, as will be shown, the Inquisitor either focused only on the defence articles provided or broadened the examination by posing questions *ex officio*.²⁵ It is hard to gauge whether formal defence contributed to any modification of the defendant's sentence.²⁶ On the contrary, sometimes the advocate could aggravate the defendant's position by declaring the case indefensible, as he was obliged to do if he was convinced that the defendant was guilty.²⁷ The proclamation of sentence was followed by the defendant's formal abjuration before the execution of the penalty.²⁸ From the late sixteenth century onwards the language of sentences and abjurations became standardised, showing the gradual formalisation that the tribunal's proceedings underwent.²⁹ Sentences were either corporal penalties or spiritual penances, for minor offences. Death sentences were not frequent.³⁰ Galley service, imprisonment and whipping were the most common physical penalties.³¹ Compared to physical penalties pronounced by Venetian secular courts, the sentencing policy of the Inquisition appears to have been relatively milder.³² Regular confession, communion and recitation of prayers constituted the spiritual

²⁵ See, 88, 103.

²⁶ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 108 – 13; Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 28 – 9.

²⁷ The advocate of the alleged crypto-Jew Felipe de Nis in 1586 declared that his client was guilty and abandoned the case, Processi (1585 – 1589), 126 – 27; on advocates in the tribunals of the Roman Inquisition, Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 136 – 39.

²⁸ On abjurations see 192 – 93.

²⁹ See 193 – 94.

³⁰ Apart from a public decapitation in 1547, all other death penalties (almost twenty-five) in the sixteenth century were carried out by secret drowning. Obviously, the authorities in executing heretics by this method did not want to provide the public with spectacle, as with the public decapitation or hanging of common criminals. Secrecy was necessary for securing Venice's reputation as a tolerant place for non-Catholics, especially Protestants with whom it had strong commercial ties. Moreover, religious dissidence associated with reform ideas was a grave concern for the government until the 1580s. In the early years after the Inquisition's establishment, inducing fear by secret executions was deemed more important than disciplining and edifying society by spectacle, as it became regular later with public whipping or public humiliation outside local churches, Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, 68 – 70, 184, 188.

³¹ For Judaizers galley service was the most regular penalty. Harsh conditions in galleys often made the punishment no different from a death penalty, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 66 – 7; on sentencing policy towards different kinds of Judaizers and gradual developments, see 67 – 9, 116 – 20; Public whipping and penance was the commonest punishment for those convicted of witchcraft, Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 219 – 21; imprisonment was often reduced after a period of time, commuted to house confinement or release on bail; on the different forms of imprisonment, Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 147 – 48.

³² Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 58 – 9.

penances,³³ which were the typical sentence passed on persons who appeared voluntarily [*sponte comparenti*] before the tribunal and confessed their offence in the seventeenth century.³⁴

As the Venetian Inquisition was designed to accommodate both Roman and Venetian elements, disagreements often arose between the lay and clerical members regarding issues such as arrest, punishment and, when requested, extradition of defendants to Rome. As the debates between the Inquisition's members were not recorded it is hard to tell how often the lay deputies' opinion diverged from that of clerics and how extensive the state's intervention was. Evidence from the Council of Ten suggests that it often monitored the Inquisition's activities in 1540 – 60.³⁵ But at the same time communication between the Venetian tribunal and Rome developed steadily.³⁶ In this view, occasional divergences that took place should not obscure that the persecution of heresy was a common objective for both Venice's government and Rome and that they shared views on right social order.³⁷ Instead of seeking to measure the degree of Venetian independence to Rome's universalism, it is more productive to see the Inquisition, as P. Grendler and B. Pullan put it, as an institution where through compromise both authorities pursued their objectives.³⁸

From the late sixteenth century the Venetian authorities sought to exercise more control over the Inquisition's activities, as the turmoil caused by the propagation of reform ideas waned.³⁹ Until 1595 the lay deputies were elected by the Doge and the Collegio (which included the Doge and his principal ministers). But from 1595 onwards the election passed to the Senate, reflecting a concern about stricter civil jurisdiction.⁴⁰ Intervention became more apparent in the 1620s.⁴¹ Also, evidence from the tribunal's composition and operation suggests a gradual decline in

³³ It seems that the Inquisition monitored convicted persons' observance of their spiritual penances. A testimonial [*fede*] from a parish priest confirming that Emmanuel Fernandes had gone to confession and communion on 25 July 1641, two months after the end of his trial, exists in the fascicolo of the *processo* against him, ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. "Emmanuele Fernandes"; on the case see 25, 123.

³⁴ For a full discussion on the *sponte comparenti* who had earlier converted to Islam, ch. 4.

³⁵ Del Col, "L'Inquisizione romana e il potere politico", 230.

³⁶ Davidson, "Rome and the Venetian Inquisition", 35.

³⁷ See the comments on Iberian Judaizers, 81 – 3, 106, 109, 118 – 23.

³⁸ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 62; Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 35, 44, 316.

³⁹ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 208 – 9, 292.

⁴⁰ Grendler, "The Tre Savii", 287 – 88.

⁴¹ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 40.

activity. In the sixteenth century the Inquisition normally met three times a week and sometimes more often. In the late 1620s the weekly sessions were reduced to two.⁴²

From the 1580s a gradual shift took place in the tribunal's preoccupations. Statistics based on the inventory of 2,910 *processi* from 1541 – 1794 (lacunae exist for 1593 – 1615, except for 1610) compiled by two late-nineteenth century archivists L. Pasini and G. Giomo suggest the decline in proceedings against suspects of what loosely defined as "Lutheranism" and the increase of cases that were generally referred to as "witchcraft practices".⁴³ Although this general shift is undeniable, the inventory and statistics obviously leave obscurities on the nature of each *processo*⁴⁴ and they do not reflect the subtleties of offences that came before the tribunal. Obvious differences existed between types of *processi* which indicated the extent of the Inquisition's activity. Some *processi* included only denunciations and others denunciations and depositions of witnesses. There were *processi* where the defendants were summoned for interrogation but the tribunal finally dropped the investigation as opposed to those that concluded with the defendants' punishment.⁴⁵ Also, perhaps some more minutely drawn statistics might shed some further light on the tribunal's activities, despite the difficulties and the arbitrariness involved in creating additional categories of heresy.⁴⁶

In the same vein, some elaboration on the cases involving Jews and Judaizers is needed. According to the Archives' inventory the cases under the rubric "Giudaismo", including incomplete and full trials, are about eighty. In P. C. Ioly Zorattini's fourteen-volume publication of "Jewish" *processi*, on which part of the

⁴² Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 18 – 9.

⁴³ 150 buste of *processi* are housed in the Venetian State Archive. Four buste of *processi* covering the years 1461 – 1558, 1561 – 1585, 1586 – 1599, 1586 – 1622 are hosted in the Archivio della Curia Patriarchale, Venice. The late nineteenth century classification of *processi* produced the *Savii all'Eresia (S. Uffizio) Indice 303* of the Venetian State Archive. The data of the Index were first published in B. Cecchetti, *La Repubblica di Venezia e la Corte di Roma nei rapporti della religione*, 2 vols. (Venice, 1874), 1: 4 – 7; statistics are given in Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 105.

⁴⁴ See the remarks in A. Jacobson Schutte, "I processi dell'Inquisizione veneziana nel Seicento: la femminilizzazione dell'eresia", in *L'Inquisizione romana in Italia nell'età moderna. Archivi, problemi di metodo e nuove ricerche*, ed. A. del Col and G. Paolin (Rome, 1991) 159 – 62.

⁴⁵ For a proposal for classifying the *processi* of the Roman Inquisition, A. del Col, "L'inventariazione degli atti processuali dell'Inquisizione romana", in Del Col and Paolin, *L'Inquisizione romana in Italia*, 107 – 9, 115 – 16.

⁴⁶ For instance, the generic term "stregoneria" that appears in the Inquisition Index covers necromancy, conjuration, divination, charms and incantations, healing and maleficium, Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 80 – 147, 192 – 213. However, no statistics have been given that clarify these subdivisions. Further elaboration on statistics concerning "Lutheranism" is provided in Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, 236, 244 – 47, where there is the distinction of Evangelical, Anabaptist and millenarian beliefs and practices.

Thesis is based, cases are almost one hundred and twenty. Evidently the editor's strategy in the publication of *processi* transcripts was to include all the cases that the accused persons were Jews or of Jewish background. Out of the one hundred and twenty *processi* almost sixty-five concerned Judaizers. The second most important category of "Jewish" *processi* involved magical arts. It is evident that from a different point of view this last category could equally be included in the general bulk of proceedings against witchcraft. The same applies to the few *processi* against Jews who kept prohibited books; the offence can be seen as part of the wider control on books the Inquisition exercised. Moreover, a distinction should be made between Judaizers of Iberian origin, the so-called Marranos, (the main focus of the Thesis as far as Judaizers are concerned), who themselves or their parents had experienced forced conversion to Christianity and returned to Judaism in Italy, and those converts to Christianity from Venice, Italy or Ottoman territories, usually called neophytes, who were accused of lapsing to their former religion, but they did not fit into the typical Iberian New Christian pattern. The hearings involving neophytes were almost half of the sixty-five concerning Judaizers.⁴⁷

The classification in the Archive's inventory and the statistics distort to some extent the Inquisition's activity in terms of some *processi* in which the Inquisition did not operate according to its typical persecuting role but it had a more mediating role. The inventory includes almost eighty *processi* (5 per cent of the seventeenth-century *processi*) under the rubric "Mohammedanism" [*Maomettanismo*], which might give the impression that the tribunal prosecuted suspects involved with Islam.⁴⁸ However, as will be shown,⁴⁹ in these *processi* the typical inquisitorial procedure was reversed as it was the defendants who approached the Inquisition to ask reconciliation with the Church after having converted, in many cases willingly, to Islam in the Ottoman lands. The same applies to persons of Protestant or Calvinist background, originating outside Italy, who also sought reconciliation to the Church, especially after they decided to settle in Venice. Both types of *processi* mainly appeared in the seventeenth century and remind us how the Inquisition gradually

⁴⁷ These remarks are based on my reading of the twelve volumes of Jewish cases and on scattered information from P. C. Ioly Zorattini, "Jews, Crypto-Jews, and the Inquisition", in *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, ed. R. C. Davis and B. Ravid (Baltimore and London, 2001), 97 – 116.

⁴⁸ This might have been the case in the Neapolitan Inquisition, Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 107

⁴⁹ Chapter 4.

transformed into a mechanism that covered a wider range of social functions. In the seventeenth century, the authority the Inquisition enjoyed even outside its typical jurisdictional matters can be seen in the 1634 case of one Anna from the S. Zulian parish, who without having been directed by her confessor, approached the Inquisition on her own to report that a spirit called Pesariol came at night to have sexual intercourse with her while she was half-asleep.⁵⁰ For a different reason in 1628 the Florentine silk worker Vincenzo appeared before the tribunal on his own. He said that he had sworn by “Puttana di Dio, pota di dio” while playing cards and having been denounced to the Inquisition of Florence by his companions he fled to Venice. The Venetian tribunal absolved him without even the usual spiritual penances.⁵¹

Inquisition documents, created in the realm of repressive officialdom, have several pitfalls and present problems of approach. Serious objections that have been raised concern the reliability of Inquisition documents in discerning the “voice” and life of the accused persons, both in terms of the documents’ pitfalls (notarial intervention, possible translation from local dialects to more standard Italian and editing process) and the danger of the Inquisitor tailoring the interrogations either due to his cultural distance as a representative of the “learned tradition” from the majority of defendants or to fit them in his preconceived official preoccupations. But to add another dimension and partly objection, though much scepticism springs from the officialdom’s distortion, assuming a one-way process of imposition, less attention has been paid to an equally warning distortion that might have resulted from the defendants’ attempt to dissimulate and manipulate the procedure by hiding their “real” beliefs to receive the lightest possible punishment or even to escape. Although there is no easy answer to these, some subtle considerations of the inquisitorial procedure and the production of documents suggests that instead of an overall scepticism much depends on evidence within the documents through close and open-minded reading and proper contextualisation.

Not all documents should be treated from the same perspective, as the nature of the document and of the offence under the Inquisition’s investigation determines the degree of the document’s reliability and different handling. For instance, a trial

⁵⁰ ASV, SU, b. 90, proc. “Anna figlia quondam Stephani”, test. 3 January 1634.

⁵¹ ASV, SU, b. 86, proc. “Vincentius de Ioannetis”.

that has survived in reported speech summary form compiled by the notary after the conclusion of the case presents more problems than a trial, as are those of the Venetian tribunal, that records the interrogation of witnesses and defendants in a “dialogic” form.⁵² Also trials in which the accused is interrogated, for instance, for crypto-Jewish practices might present fewer problems than trials where delicate theological issues are involved, or there is an obvious distance between the learned culture of the judges and that of the accused.

In cases of crypto-Judaism and crypto-Muslim practices that are analysed here there was an obvious difference from other cases. The Inquisitors’ task was mainly to “establish” facts that indicated the accused person’s detachment from Catholicism. The defendants were accused of what they had done or had not done according to Catholic customs that they were supposed to observe. The “dialogue” between Inquisitor and defendant never entered into issues of belief and personal ideology. Especially in Iberian crypto-Jewish cases, from the mid-sixteenth century the Inquisitors obtained a secure means around which they structured the interrogation: someone’s birth and inevitable baptism in Iberia. Paul IV’s decree of 1556 prescribed that all those who had been born in Spain and Portugal were regarded as baptised, and even forced baptisms were valid. Consequently any return to Judaism was apostasy.

However, even in cases where popular beliefs were investigated the distortion caused by cultural gap between the Inquisitor and the interrogated persons is sometimes overstressed. A point that should be made is that among the judges there were many of humble origins. Also a number of officials that worked in the tribunals such as constables, jailers and notaries, who might have been closer to popular attitudes, were sometimes intermediaries between the judges and the defendants.⁵³ From the 1634 case of Anna from S. Zulian we might get a glimpse into the judges’ sharing of certain cultural elements and norms with defendants from the lower classes. In her spontaneous deposition Anna testified that when she was young she suffered from a breathing difficulty so that she could not speak, and on those occasions she said that this was caused by Pesariol. When she appeared before the

⁵² See for instance the summary trial discussed in C. Ginzburg, “Witchcraft and Popular Piety: Notes on a Modenese Trial of 1519”, in his *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, trans. J. and A. Tedeschi (London, 1990), 1 – 16.

⁵³ Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 49.

Inquisition, at the age of thirty-eight she reported that the same spirit had sexual intercourse with her. After the deposition the Inquisitor immediately questioned Anna whether she had intercourse with Pesariol when she was awake, whether Pesariol and she emitted sperm during the intercourse, whether when she had sex with her husband the spirit also appeared and participated and how aware was Anna's husband of the incident. Interestingly, though, despite his questions to extract details on the incident there was no question on any clarification on Pesariol. Clearly both the judge and the interrogated person shared knowledge and understanding about it. Only after the end of the case did the notary record, as was the normal procedure, on the back of the last folio of the hearing's fascicolo the nature of investigation, that Anna had sexual relations with the spirit Pesariol.⁵⁴

As far as the interrogations of the accused persons are concerned the tribunal required that the notaries should keep detailed accounts of the verbal exchange recording scrupulously the interrogation. The notaries usually recorded even the behaviour of the persons questioned, for instance, their cry, grief or exasperation. In 1555, in the second session of the interrogation of Tristao or Licentato Costa, a Portuguese accused of judaizing, the notary recorded that the interrogated sighed and then inserted in the formal interrogation the following dialogue between the Inquisitor and Costa: "He [Costa] was asked: Haven't you sighed? He [Costa] said: Sir, because I am stressed from the interrogation".⁵⁵ Another example of the notary's meticulous recording of the verbal exchange is found in the 1585 interrogation of the alleged Spanish crypto-Jew Francisco Dies, servant of the De Nis family, as he was subjected to the torture called *la corda* [the rope]: "And then the order was given for him [Francisco] to be raised, and when he was raised he said: 'Hai, ahi, ahi, mercy, show mercy sir I'm dying, ahi, ahi, ahi, mercy...'" The notaries did not fail to write

⁵⁴ ASV, SU, b 90, proc. "Anna figlia quondam Stephani", test. 3 January 1634: "Interrogata se quel Pesariolo habbia usato mai seco carnalmente mentre essa si trovava svegliata [...] Interrogata se in quell'atto che il Pesariol usava seco, spargeva il seme, tanto lui, quanto lei [...] Interrogata se suo marito se sia accorto di questi atti, che usava con essa il Pesariol [...] Interrogata se nell'atto istesso che sua marito usa con essa, sia venuto il Pesariolo, ad usar qualche atto ancor esso [...] Anna quondam Stephani ...cum spiritus Pesariolus rem carnalem habuit". The term "Pesariolo", a local variant (in Treviso was used the term "Fracariòla", meant spirit, but also described a sudden breath failure during sleep (in Latin, incubus), G. Boerio, *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano* (Venice, 1856; reprint, Florence, 1998), 495; for another example of the Inquisitor sharing a widely held view that a Jew who converted to Islam had to convert earlier to Christianity, 186.

⁵⁵ Processi (1548 – 1560), 258 – 59: "Et misit suspirium et dum scriberetur...Et essendoli detto: Non havete voi suspirato? Dixit: Signor, per esser astretto dall'interrogatorio"; for a detailed discussion of the case, 70 – 84.

down Venetian dialect variants or even Spanish or Portuguese pronunciations where Iberian witnesses were involved. In 1585, the neophyte Giorgio from Rovigo reported to the Inquisition that he had met a Jew in the S. Marco Piazza who reproached him for being a Christian. The notary recorded the insults, as Giorgio translated some phrases from Hebrew in Italian: "...he came to find me and said to me in Hebrew: 'Fool, or Beast!' And then he told me: 'Be accursed!' And then in Italian he said to me: 'Madness!' And asked me if I have lost my mind and as I stepped back, he said: 'Come here beast, are you afraid?' in Italian. I did not reply and I left him barking like a dog..."⁵⁶ In the same vein, the notary recorded Portuguese words that Francisco Dies uttered during torture.⁵⁷

Although much debate on the accused persons' "voice" has taken place in Inquisition studies, little attention has been paid to the recording of the Inquisitor's questions which is at least equally complicated and opaque. There is no indication on the documents of the official who posed the questions but it seems that it was the Inquisitor, who, as a specialist in theology, and often in canon law and as an experienced interrogator, mainly conducted the interrogation. The Inquisitor questioned the interrogated persons in Italian and the questions were also recorded in Italian, although sometimes in Latin, perhaps as a result of the long tradition in ecclesiastical courts. This is most evident in transcription of interrogations which other Inquisitions sent to the Venetian tribunal. In these cases the Inquisitor's questions were always recorded in Latin.⁵⁸

In contrast with the words of witnesses and defendants that were recorded in direct speech, the judges' questions were turned into reported speech. Although no clear indication exists why the notaries and the tribunal followed this policy, it is plausible to assume that it was the witnesses and defendants' words that counted

⁵⁶ Processi (1585 – 1589), 73 – 4: "...vene a trovarmi et me disse in hebraycho: 'Bestia, o bestion!' Et poi me disse: 'Siestu maledetto!' Et poi in italiano me disse: 'Mattana!' Et me domandò s'io haveva perso el cervello et quando io mi ritirava da lui, mi diceva: 'Vien qua bestion, hai tu paura?' In lingua italiana. Io non gli risposi et lo lassai bagiar come un cane"; on notaries' close recording of dialects on judicial records of trials from the Pentidattilo village in Calabria, T. Astarita, *Village Justice. Community, Family, and Popular Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Baltimore and London, 1999), xxi – xxiii.

⁵⁷ Processi (1585 – 1589), 113, 114: "'Ne ho un grande et tres donnas' [...] plorando multa alia verba idiomate hispano [...] et che erano richi et che erano Hebreos"; see additional examples of meticulous recording, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 120; Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 82 – 3.

⁵⁸ See, for instance, the documents of interrogations conducted in the Inquisition of Ferrara and later sent to Venice for the case of Duarte Gomez and Agostinho Enrichez in 1555: Processi (1561 – 1570), 79 – 88.

more, regardless of the question.⁵⁹ The way the interrogator's question was introduced by the use of the Latin passive participle "interrogatus - interrogata" [(s)he was asked] indicates that the method of recording the "dialogue" pointed mainly to the witnesses and defendants' answers. The same is evident from the questions which the notary did not record at all but he set down only the answer and just indicated that a question prompted the answer in the following formulation: (s)he said when asked... [*Dicens interrogatus* or *interrogatus respondit*].

However, occasionally, the pattern of the Inquisitor's questions, as were written down on paper, changed. While the sequence of questions followed the typical third person reported speech method, some questions were inserted in the second person (mainly in plural) showing that the interrogator directly addressed the interrogated. In the 1555 interrogation of the alleged crypto-Jew Duarte Gomez from Portugal the typical third person questions in reported speech were regularly interrupted by second person questions in direct speech:

He was asked whether he [Gomez] knows that the Church commands that once a year after having confessed, every good Christian should receive communion in the parish church and not anywhere else.

[Gomez] answered: Yes, sir, but in my country someone who does not receive communion in the parish is equally allowed to go to the cathedral and fulfil his duty. So as a foreigner here I was sure that the cathedral was the S. Marco church, but later I heard that the cathedral was the church of S. Pietro di Castello.

He was asked: why have you decided to leave your parish church and go to the cathedral?

After some more questions in reported speech, another question was recorded in second person direct speech:

He [Gomez] was asked: It does not seem plausible that a learned and intelligent man like you confessed to a friar that you did not know; so for the sake of clarification to justice, since you said that you would recognise this friar who confessed you, by any means you have to find him.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ This is evident in letters from the Roman Congregation to local Inquisitions urging the Inquisitors to send trial summaries with the witnesses and defendant's words recorded verbatim, whereas the Inquisitors were mainly warned to avoid leading questions, Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 48, 132.

⁶⁰ The original text is found in chapter 2, n. 94, 96, 98.

It is difficult to gauge the reason why the notary occasionally inserted these direct questions in the sequence of reported speech questions. The direct speech questions might have reflected sudden interventions by the Inquisitor when the interrogation culminated and his attempt to leave the interrogated little leeway to manoeuvre. The indirect speech questions might have been produced after some short consultation between the Inquisitor, the notary and the interrogated for a possible explanation of the question, whereas in the direct questions no such brief discussion took place. In this view, these direct questions might have been close to the actual words of the Inquisitor, as some reported speech question might indicate that the notary had summarised the original question, although in general judging from the majority of detailed reported speech questions, even in this case we might have been closer to the actual question than a *précis* by the notary. Another explanation could be that the Inquisitor posed most of his questions in a more distant manner as if speaking on behalf of the tribunal: (a hypothetical formulation) “Could the accused tell us...”. So, when the interrogation culminated or a crucial point needed clarification the typical distant manner gave place to directly posed questions. In the final analysis, the importance of those questions recorded in direct speech lies in that they reflected the dynamics in the Inquisitor-interrogated “dialogue” and the attempt to exercise control, which shows that the unfolding of the “dialogue” was not always a one-way process.⁶¹

Generally, compared with other courts, the Venetian Inquisition, as many of its interpreters have pointed out,⁶² was a relatively cautious institution with fairly strict rules and bureaucratic procedures codified in manuals and regular guidelines from Rome which prevented potential outbursts of over-zeal. The local context, its composition and occasional tension with the Venetian state also contributed to the Inquisition’s regulated activity. These remarks also stand for the wider operation of the Roman Inquisition with its manifold concerns and its repressive measures being accompanied by disciplinary correction and re-educating initiatives. The tribunals’ place and interaction with the local context both at the level of the authorities and the

⁶¹ For further discussion, see ch. 4; see also the remarks on a similar issue, although from a late fifteenth century trial: D. Quaglioni and A. Esposito, “I processi contro ebrei di Trento, 1475”, in *La parola all'accusato*, ed. J. C. Maire Vigueur and A. Paravicini Bagliani (Palermo, 1991), 304 – 6.

⁶² Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 56; Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 56, 142, 314.

populace, with their appeal having been wider than it might in general have been assumed, require a more thorough consideration.⁶³

Venice's Cosmopolitan Nature and the Jewish Ghetto

Among the Venetian authorities' concerns about the establishment of the Inquisition was the impact which it might have had on the city's image as a tolerant place for non-Catholics and non-Christians with whom the Republic had strong economic and political interests. Early modern Venice was one of the most cosmopolitan cities of the Mediterranean and this aspect recurrently found a place in contemporary writings on the city. "Apart from the governors, the nobles and a few citizens, the rest of people are foreigners and few Venetians", wrote the banker Girolamo Priuli in his diaries in the early sixteenth century.⁶⁴ In the same vein, the Vicentine noble Luigi Da Porto wrote in 1509:

...apart from a few with long-established citizenship ... all the rest are such new people [*gente si nuova*] that there are very few of them whose fathers were born in Venice; and they are Slavs, Greeks, Albanians, come in other times to be sailors, or to earn money from the various trades pursued there, the profits of which have been able to keep them [in Venice]. [...] There are also many people who have come from diverse places for dealing and warehousing, as from Germany and all of Italy.⁶⁵

As a transit city between the Mediterranean and northern Europe and a colonial power with extensive Mediterranean dependencies (the so-called *stato da mar*) as late as 1669, when the Ottoman advance dealt a major blow by conquering Crete, Venice's centrepiece in the Levant, Venice was a place of attraction for immigrants, among them merchants and labourers, from other Italian cities, the Germanic lands and the Levant.⁶⁶ Venice witnessed the influx of large numbers of refugees from former Venetian colonies along the Dalmatian Coast and in Greek

⁶³ C. F. Black, *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy* (Basingstoke and New York, 2004), 51 – 54, 171 – 98.

⁶⁴ G. Priuli, *I diarii*, ed. A. Segre, R. Cessi, 3 vols. (Bologna and Città del Castello, 1912 – 38), 4: 101.

⁶⁵ D. Chambers and B. Pullan, ed., *Venice. A Documentary History, 1450 – 1630* (Oxford, 1992), 269.

⁶⁶ Migration, mainly from the rest of Italy, was motivated by Venice's expanding cloth industry from the 1520s until the 1620s, D. Sella, "The Rise and Fall of the Venetian Woollen Industry", in *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. B. Pullan (London, 1968), 108 – 11.

areas which were gradually conquered by the Ottomans. Migration became steadier in the second half of the sixteenth century; this was to a certain extent the result of the Venetian nobility's gradual withdrawal from eastern Mediterranean commerce, their medieval landmark activity, and from shipbuilding and ship-owning at the expense of land investment in the mainland [*terraferma*] and service to the state.⁶⁷ Part of Venice's mercantile activity gradually passed to certain non-Christian and non-Catholic groups, with Jews, mainly from the Levant, having a prominent role and being followed by other Levantines both from the Venetian colonies and the Ottoman lands. The new situation in the Venetian market is mirrored in the words of the English traveller Thomas Coryate describing the S. Marco Piazza in the early seventeenth century:

Here you may both see all manner of fashions of attire, and heare all the languages of Christendome, besides those that are spoken by the barbarous Ethnickes ...a man may very properly call it rather Orbis than Urbis forum, that is, a market place of the world, not of the citie.⁶⁸

As a result Venice hosted significant communities of Jews, eastern communicants (Orthodox and Uniates), Armenians and Muslims.⁶⁹ People who belonged to but also diverged from these groups are the focus of the Thesis. Individuals who indecisively or deliberately transgressed the religious boundaries in Catholic Venice which made the presence of the Other tolerated and as a result they faced the locals' suspicion and the Inquisition's coercion. The offences examined here illustrate Venice's transit role in the Mediterranean, as for many of the offenders the city was one among their destinations. Among those who transgressed the boundaries of Otherness Judaizers of Iberian origin prominently figure. Their presence in Venice was obviously associated with the city's organised Jewish communities of the Ghettos, from which at the same time they deviated. The establishment of the Venetian Ghettos is a well-known and analysed event, so I will

⁶⁷ B. Pullan, "The Occupations and Investments of the Venetian Nobility in the Middle and Late Sixteenth Century", in Hale, *Renaissance Venice*, 380 – 81, 386, 393; S. J. Woolf, "Venice and the Terraferma: Problems of the Change from Commercial to Landed Activities", in Pullan, *Crisis and Change*, 181 – 82, 198.

⁶⁸ T. Coryate, *Coryats Crudities (1611)*, introduction by W. M. Schutte, facsimile edn (London, 1978), 171.

⁶⁹ On the Christian and Muslim Levantines' pattern of residence and mercantile activity, 124 – 45.

limit my discussion to a brief guide of basic facts that defined the Jewish presence from an official viewpoint.⁷⁰

By decree of the Senate in March 1516 a separate area, the Ghetto, was established and the Jews of Venice had to go and live there. The legislation intended to solve the problem of the Jewish presence in the city. Before 1516 the Jews were allowed to live in the city only for limited periods.⁷¹ The occupation of Venice's mainland by the armies of the League of Cambrai in 1509 caused an influx of refugees in Venice, including many Jews from Padua and Mestre; among them there were some wealthy Jewish moneylenders who took advantage of a charter in 1503 that allowed them to go to Venice on special occasions. In 1513, realising the benefits from taxpaying and the involvement of Jews in small-scale money lending for the urban poor, the Council of Ten renewed the charter of 1503 allowing money lending even within Venice. In 1515, in return for a loan, the Jews were allowed to engage in the second-hand trade [*strazzaria*].

However, beyond the government's policy dictated by the social and financial needs, the presence of the Jews in the city caused uneasiness. Within the turmoil of the war the issue of Jewish presence was stirred up by clerics, who preached against money lending practices and the residence of the Jews in the city.⁷² At the same time, as a result of failures during the war, spiritual fervour and eschatological anguish prevailed in Venice and penitence was sought to placate divine wrath.⁷³ Atonement had to include action against the uncontrolled presence of the Jews in the city. Accordingly, in 1516 the Senate reconsidered a proposal of the earlier year to transfer the Jews to Giudecca.⁷⁴ This time the plan was the creation of a distinctive area, the so-called Ghetto Nuovo, for the Jews, in one of the outmost parts of the city, at the sestiere of Cannaregio, a choice that expressed the hierarchisation of the

⁷⁰ The Jews' settlement, legal position and economic role have been extensively examined in a series of articles by B. Ravid. For an up-to-date overview on the Jews in Venice with extensive bibliography, Davis and Ravid, *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*.

⁷¹ According to an old view, which has now been refuted, sometime in the thirteen century the Jews lived on Giudecca hence the island's name. Interestingly, however, the 1555 anonymous denunciation against Duarte Gomez and Agostinho Enrichez made the following reference: "In ancient times these animals [i.e. the Jews] were held in Giudecca, other times in Mestre, now in the Ghetto...", Processi (1561 – 1570), 72.

⁷² Several incidents are reported in Marino Sanuto, *I Diarii di Marin Sanuto*, ed. R. Fulin, 58 vols. (Venice, 1879 – 1903), 7: col. 40, 8: col. 70 – 1.

⁷³ E. Crouzet – Pavan, "Venice between Jerusalem, Byzantium, and Divine Retribution: The Origins of the Ghetto", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 6, 2 (1991): 168 – 71.

⁷⁴ R. Finlay, "The Foundation of the Ghetto: Venice, the Jews, and the War of the League of Cambrai", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 126, 2 (1982): 147 – 49.

urban space according to notions of public order, as Cannaregio was among the marginal areas of Venice, excluded from the centre of administration and trade.⁷⁵

A number of rules were imposed regarding the Ghetto Nuovo's topographical arrangement and subsequent functioning. These rules reflected the socio-religious position of a Jewish minority living within Christian population. The area of the Ghetto Nuovo was walled up and the two remaining gates were to be opened and closed at sunrise and at sunset. The two gates and curfew time were under the responsibility of four Christian guards, and two boats going around day and night guarded the Ghetto. The supervision of the Ghetto and the surveillance of the rules were assigned to the magistracy of the *Ufficiali al Cattaver*. In several cases permission was granted to Jewish doctors, merchants and entertainers to stay outside the Ghetto after the closing of the gates or to reside for a period in the city but the observation of the measures and the restrictions was always a serious and constant concern for the authorities.⁷⁶

The establishment of the Ghetto Nuovo was dictated by the religious climate of 1516. That solution marked a turning point in Venice's policy on the Jews. The Venetian government seems to have favoured the presence of the Jews in the city for a number of reasons. The Ghetto Nuovo was intended for the Italian and German Jews, the so-called Tedeschi Jews. That group consisted of small bankers and second-hand dealers [*strazzaruoli*]. Their permanent settlement in the city offered new chances in money lending practises in which the policy of the Venetian government was dictated by realistic tackle of credit methods. While in the mainland territories of Venice the establishment of *monti di pietà* flourished, Venice itself never adopted that pattern. Thus, it relied on Jewish loans at low rate. The reluctance of the Venetian government to introduce *monti di pietà* in the city, despite the attempts in 1520 and 1523 – 24, was mainly due to the policy of the Council of Ten, which, by contrast to the Senate which occasionally favoured the establishment of a *monte di pietà* followed a more pragmatic approach to the Venetian affairs. In contrast with the *monti di pieta* the Jewish pawnshops in Venice offered the government the opportunity of additional income from their taxation, and could contribute towards the easiness of social tensions by lending to the destitute. The

⁷⁵ Crouzet – Pavan, "Venice between Jerusalem", 179.

⁷⁶ B. Ravid, "Curfew Time in the Ghetto of Venice", in *Medieval and Renaissance Venice*, ed. E. E. Kittell and T. F. Madden (Urbana, 1999), 241 – 51.

establishment of the first Ghetto seems to have been a compromise between the financial needs of Venice and the need for religious piety and conformity.⁷⁷ The Jewish moneylenders' presence in Venice was based on charters which were renewed after negotiations with the government every five years.

Different circumstances dictated the creation of the Ghetto Vecchio in 1541, as an expansion of the Ghetto Nuovo. The Ghetto Vecchio was intended for attracting Levantine Jews from the Ottoman Empire, whose prominent commercial activity between Italian ports and the Levant had earlier been recognised by the Venetian Board of Trade, the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*. The space in the Ghetto Nuovo was not sufficient for the Jewish merchants since until then, they were required to live with the Tedeschi Jews. The Ghetto Vecchio was contiguous to the older Ghetto but separated by a bridge. A similar topographical policy was followed. The area came under the jurisdiction of the guards of the Ghetto Nuovo and the same rules were applied regarding curfew time.

Unlike the Ghetto Nuovo where the dwelling of the Tedeschi Jews could be permanent, depending on the renewal of their charters, residence in the Ghetto Vecchio was temporary not exceeding four months, although some months later at the request of some Jewish merchants, the Venetian government extended the period of residence to two years. Also the Jewish merchants were not permitted to bring their families. Among the Levantine Jews there were Jews or their descendants of Iberian origin, who had fled after the Spanish Edict of expulsion of 1492 and the forced conversion in Portugal in 1497 for the Ottoman Empire. Some of them were New Christians who had returned to Judaism in the Levant. From the 1540s, thanks to the Ghettos, Venice became an attractive destination for other groups of judaizing New Christians, those who had departed from Portugal after the establishment of the Inquisition in 1536 and those who had been expelled from the Netherlands. Portuguese New Christians who reverted to Judaism and lived in the Ghettos generally were not a concern for the Venetian government, even after Paul IV's new policy in 1556. But the authorities were concerned about those New Christians who decided to live outside the Ghettos in the guise of Christians but secretly practiced

⁷⁷ B. Pullan, "Jewish Banks and Monti di Pietà", in Davis and Ravid, *The Jew of Early Modern Venice*, 62 – 64.

Judaism. On two occasions in 1497 and 1550 the Senate decreed the expulsion of these judaizing New Christians.

From economic considerations, Venice became more favourable to Levantine Jewish merchants with the charter of 1589. The charter entitled Levantine Jews to live in the Ghetto with their families and trade as Venetian subjects for ten years, and also extended these privileges to another group of Jews, the so-called Ponentines, that is, western Jews – a neutral term referring to Jews of New Christian origin. The Venetian authorities explicitly gave permission to New Christians to settle as Jews in the Ghettos. As with the Tedeschi Jews, the Levantine and Ponentine Jews' charter had to be renewed in the Senate every ten years. A final step to facilitate the settlement of merchants was taken in 1633 with another expansion of the Ghetto, an area called Ghetto Nuovissimo.

The Venetian Ghettos of 1516 and 1541 reflected a local event and have no direct relation with the proliferation of Ghettos, as the typical Jewish settlement, in the Italian cities of the second half of the sixteenth century, which, from a Jewish perspective, has defined the post-Tridentine period as the age of the Ghettos. This was based on the principles set by Paul IV's 1555 Bull *Cum nimis absurdum*, which instituted the Roman Ghetto.⁷⁸ In Venice, despite the negative connotations and the rigid restrictions imposed, the Jews might have been favourably disposed towards the Ghetto settlement. Notwithstanding occasional threats from the government for their expulsion such as in 1571, the Tedeschi Jewish moneylenders and the Levantine merchants continued to seek the renewal of their charters.⁷⁹

The Concept of the "Other" and Methodological Insights

My purpose is not to provide a solid conceptual framework on the construction of Otherness, but to map some theoretical avenues and difficulties most pertinent to my

⁷⁸ A. Foa, *The Jews of Europe after the Black Death*, trans. A. Grover (Berkeley and London, 2000), 138 - 43

⁷⁹ B. Ravid, "Between the Myth of Venice and the Lachrymose Conception of Jewish History: The Case of the Jews of Venice", in *The Jews of Italy: Memory and Identity*, ed. B. Cooperman and B. Garvin (Potomac, 2000), 152 – 59; motivated by religious fervour after Lepanto, the Senate voted the expulsion of Jewish moneylenders from the city, but later economic considerations reversed the plan, B. Ravid, "The Socioeconomic Background of the Expulsion and Readmission of the Venetian Jews, 1571 – 1573", in *Essays in Modern Jewish History. A Tribute to Ben Halpern*, ed. F. Malino and A. P. Cohen (Rutherford, 1982), 41 – 51.

study. Roughly speaking, the concept of Otherness functions as a meaningful unit of analysis at two levels: the external Other and the internal Other of a given society, which is politically, spatially and socially situated. This division between the external and the internal Other appears a plausible way of investigation with reference to the way the discourse on the Other is articulated and the process of othering takes place in relation to the interaction between the Self and the Other. Charles Taylor's remarks on the external Other are perceptive:

The 'savage', the other of civilization, provided a way for European to define themselves, both favorably (applying 'civilized' to themselves in self-congratulation) and sometimes unfavorably (Europeans as corrupted in contrast to the 'noble savage'). This kind of other reference requires no interaction. Indeed, the less interaction the better, or else the stereotype may be resisted.⁸⁰

Both concepts (the external and internal Other) are multidimensional and may operate simultaneously, analogically, reciprocally and complementarily.⁸¹ Both concepts converge at the point that "there is no knowledge of the Other which is not also a temporal, historical, a political act", to adapt the view of Johannes Fabian on anthropologists' work.⁸² But for the sake of analysis the two concepts may be seen in their own terms, although, as will be shown, certain notions developed in the study of the external Other are also pertinent to the discussion on the internal Other.

Some of the most fruitful contributions to the analysis of the external Other and the process of othering emerged from the study of European encounters with people outside Europe, of European colonial discourse, and of nationalism and the construction of national identity. It was Edward Said's *Orientalism*, crucially laying the groundwork for the subsequent development of postcolonial theory and cultural studies, which used the term "the Other" for the non-Europeans on which British and French-colonial scholarly discourse was developed: "The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the

⁸⁰ C. Taylor, "Nationalism and Modernity", in *The Morality of Nationalism*, ed. R. McKim and J. McMahan (New York and London, 1997), 49. On this point also see, D. Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion. Society and Difference in the West* (London, 1995), 18.

⁸¹ This is evident in the gradual transformation of the medieval popular notions of the otherness of the wild man to the wildness of the colonized non-European in Renaissance literature: R. Bartra, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass. The Mythic Origins of European Otherness* (Ann Harbor, 1994), 171 – 202.

⁸² J. Fabian, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 1983), 1.

source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other". The value of Said's thesis lies in that Orientalism should be seen "as a discourse...by which European culture was able to manage – and even to produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, military, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period".⁸³

Said's argument on the process of othering through discursive inventions and representational modes as the creation of the "domestic subject"⁸⁴ of expansion and colonialism (the Euroimperialism of lettered bourgeois, as Mary Louise Pratt puts it for the eighteenth century),⁸⁵ launched a new set of literature which treats the non-European Other in colonial texts, as in the writings of Christopher Columbus, other conquistadors and later colonizers of the New World, and in travel narratives. Said's argument that "Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world" constitutes the core of scholarship on Otherness.⁸⁶ Thus, what is important here is that power and domination emanate from and depend on the construction of the object through the creation of analytical categories and representational modes, which in their turn tell us more about the apparatus which produces the discourse than about the object of the discourse. In Said's words, "analysis of the Orientalist text therefore places emphasis on the evidence, which is by no means invisible, for such representations *as representations*, not as 'natural' depictions of the Orient".⁸⁷ In this view, images of the external Other serve as the basis of the formation and sustaining of individual and collective identity in Western culture. Otherness is a mirror of western civilizing discourse.⁸⁸

⁸³ E. Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth, 1995) (1st published 1978), 1, 3; together with Said's work, another early study needs to be mentioned here for its importance in textual analysis of colonial discourse: F. Barker et al., eds., *Europe and Its Others. Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1984*, 2 vols. (Colchester, 1985).

⁸⁴ The expression of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her *In Other Worlds. Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York and London, 1987).

⁸⁵ M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York, 1992), 2, 34.

⁸⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 12.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 21, (Said's italics).

⁸⁸ Bartra, *Wild Men*, 144-48, 171-77, 183-84.

This idea has been central in the growing literature on cultural encounters and “implicit ethnography” in the context of subordination. Stephen Greenblatt has emphasized the power of representation regardless of any potential reference to reality: “European contact with the New World natives is continually mediated by representations; indeed contact itself, at least where it does not consist entirely of acts of wounding and killing, is very often contact between representatives bearing representations. And even the wounding and killing is often bound up with an attack on representations”.⁸⁹ In a similar fashion, for Tzvetan Todorov the creation of categories, the conceptualization and depiction of difference, constitutes part of the colonizing and hegemonizing process.⁹⁰ The machinery of representation and discourse is mainly an act of self-perception or self-projection on the Other; in Greenblatt’s words, “the early modern discourse of discovery is a superbly powerful register of the characteristic claims and limits of European representational practice”.⁹¹ At an extreme point, deconstruction of the Eurocentric apparatus of colonial discourse denies any exteriority which colonial discourse discovered and distorted. According to José Rabasa, “emphasis on the production of America as something ‘new’ – that is, semiotically created – challenges the view of the New World as a natural entity, discovered, revealed, or imperfectly understood”.⁹² These views leave little leeway to regard the process of perceiving and reporting the Other as reliable descriptions of it, or to retrieve the “voice” of the Other even in a distorted manner. As Michel de Certeau maintains, “the scriptural operation which produces, preserves, and cultivates imperishable ‘truths’ is connected to a rumor of words that vanish no sooner than they are uttered, and which are therefore lost forever”, or in R. Bartra’s words “the Other has concealed the other”.⁹³

The auto-definition and self-congratulatory use of the external Other has also been highlighted in the construction of national identities and nation-building, as “an

⁸⁹ S. Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions. The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford, 1991), 119.

⁹⁰ T. Todorov, *The Conquest of America. The Question of the Other*, trans. R. Howard (New York, 1992) 38, 42, 49-50.

⁹¹ Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 23; see also, A. Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man. The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge, 1987), 200.

⁹² J. Rabasa, *Inventing America. Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism* (Norman and London, 1993), 6.

⁹³ M. de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. T. Conley (New York, 1988), 212; Bartra, *Wild Men*, 207 – 8.

imagined political community” in Benedict Anderson’s terms.⁹⁴ Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out that “there is no more effective way of bonding together the disparate sections of restless peoples than to unite them against outsiders”.⁹⁵ The formative role of the external Other in enforcing the notion of community is also emphasized by Peter Sahlins who maintains that national identity is relational and “it is defined by the social or territorial boundaries drawn to distinguish the collective self and its implicit negation, the other”.⁹⁶ Similarly, Linda Colley argues that the emergence of Britain as an “artificial nation” above internal frictions and other allegiances, and with Protestantism being the unifying force was due to the confrontation with the external Other (the Catholic France and colonial subjects) through wars and colonial rule during the eighteenth century.⁹⁷ Eighteenth-century French and English novels indicate that for both nations each other functioned as the essential Other through generalizations and strict juxtapositions.⁹⁸

Another perspective of the European construction of Otherness, which allows us to come closer to the notion of the internal Other, comes from Maria Todorova’s work on the Balkan Other. The articulation of the Balkan Otherness since the eighteenth century is a subtle case of Europe’s Others, which serves a special interest and it does not easily fit into the Oriental discourse. The Balkans are the Other within, and as such represented Europe’s anticivilization, or Europe’s incomplete self. The Balkan Other provided a convenient substitute for orientalism without the burden of colonialism, racism and eurocentrism.⁹⁹

The colonial and the external Other correspond to two forms of Otherness featuring in my Thesis under the rubric of the Levantine Other. Levantine subjects from Venice’s colonies (and former ones, as, despite the Ottoman conquest, Venetian

⁹⁴ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991), 6.

⁹⁵ E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, 1990), 91.

⁹⁶ P. Sahlins, *Boundaries. The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley and Oxford, 1989), 271.

⁹⁷ L. Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London, 1992); eadem, “Britishness and Otherness. An Argument”, *Journal of British Studies*, 31, 4 (1992): 309-29.

⁹⁸ W. Ray, *Story and History. Narrative Authority and Social Identity in the Eighteenth-Century French and English Novel* (Oxford, 1990).

⁹⁹ Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*; in the European context, Peter Burke has noted that in the early modern period northern European travellers were inclined to see Italy as the Other: P. Burke, “The Discreet Charm of Milan: English Travellers in the Seventeenth Century”, in his *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1997), 94-101.

imperial aspirations did not cease)¹⁰⁰ in Dalmatia, coastal Albania and Greek areas and the Other represented by the Ottoman Muslims.

However, other forms of Otherness prominent in the Thesis, crypto-Judaism and crypto-Islam, require some special treatment and qualification since they constitute a special case of the internal Other. In the Venetian context the Jews of the Ghetto can be seen as the pure internal Other. Different norms govern these two forms of internal Otherness. The Jews in the Ghetto represent an institutionalized form of internal Other since their presence was well established and governed by Church and State rules.¹⁰¹ Their position (as well as that of the Muslims in the seventeenth-century *Fondaco dei Turchi*) is clear and the boundary constituting their Otherness is clear-cut. On the other hand, crypto-Jews and crypto-Muslims could be better described with Erving Goffman's term "the in-group deviants".¹⁰² From Maria Todorova's apt discussion on balkanism two peculiar features in the construction process emerge which are pertinent to the construction of crypto-Jewish and crypto-Muslim Otherness in the Inquisition trials in Venice: the in-betweenness and mainly the discourse on ambiguity.¹⁰³ Thus, the main difference between the two forms of the internal Other (firstly, the Jews of the Ghetto, and secondly, crypto-Jews and crypto-Muslims), lies in the clear-cut or ambiguous boundaries which define these internal Others respectively.

The ambiguous internal Other needs some further qualification. The "discovery" and construction of the internal Other has been exemplified in M. Foucault's works on Madness and Transgression. Foucault's internal mad Other paves the way for several forms of Otherness, be it criminality, religious and sexual deviance, disability or poverty. Deviance from determined cultural norms and transgression of boundaries of inclusion/exclusion define the internal Other. Two issues from Foucault's work are most pertinent to my discussion. Ambiguity and the

¹⁰⁰ See the point in L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1994), 114.

¹⁰¹ On the theological and ideological basis on which the Jewish presence amidst the Christian population was accepted, R. Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, trans. A. Oldcorn (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1994), 44-50, 63-77.

¹⁰² E. Goffman, *Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (London, 1990) (1st published 1963), 169.

¹⁰³ L. Wolff makes a similar argument on the ambiguity of Central Europe, as "Europe but not Europe, and its invention as "an intellectual project of demi-Orientalism" in eighteenth-century West European thought: *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 7, 9, 13; similarly, see the ambiguous otherness of the Scythians for Herodotus, F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus. The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. J. Lloyd (Berkeley and London, 1988), 30.

perception of Otherness, madness in Foucault's case, are closely related: "madness...it hides and manifests, it utters truth and falsehood, it is light and shadow".¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, transgression depends not only on the identity of culture but also on the boundary: "The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess. [...] Transgression carries the limit right to the limit of its being; transgression forces the limit to face the fact of its imminent disappearance, to find itself in what it excludes".¹⁰⁵ Deviance is governed by discourse and perception, medical in the case of madness, religious in the case of the Inquisition; discourse and perception focus on ambiguity as transgressor of liminality.

Georg Simmel, whose sociological insights have currently attracted a renewed interest, addresses the issues of the internal Other, ambiguity and boundary in his short essay of 1908 on "the stranger". "The stranger", Simmel writes, "is an element of the group itself, not unlike the poor and sundry 'inner enemies', an element whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it".¹⁰⁶ Ambiguity and marginality are central in Simmel's work. "The stranger" is the margin of the collective self but this marginality is not only defined by social and economic notions of "objectivity". According to Simmel, the stranger's "actions are not confined by custom, piety, or precedent".¹⁰⁷ Similarly, Anne Norton points out the role of the ambiguous marginal (what she calls "liminar" groups) in identity formation: "individual and collective identities are created not simply in the difference between self and other but in those moments of ambiguity where one is other to oneself, and in the recognition of the other as like".¹⁰⁸ These remarks show, in accordance with Fredrik Barth's argument on the importance of studying ethnic groups' identity on the basis of boundaries,¹⁰⁹ that in the study of Self/Other the formation and maintenance of boundaries is equally important as the characteristics endogenously attributed or associated with collective identity.

¹⁰⁴ M. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization. A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. R. Howard (London, 1997) (1st published 1961), 36.

¹⁰⁵ M. Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression (1963)", in *Religion and Culture by Michel Foucault*, ed. J. R. Carrette, trans. D. F. Bouchard and S. Simon (Manchester, 1999), 60.

¹⁰⁶ G. Simmel, "The Stranger", in *Georg Simmel. On Individuality and Social Forms. Selected Writings*, ed. D. N. Levine, trans. D. N. Levine (Chicago and London, 1971), 144.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁰⁸ A. Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity* (Baltimore and London, 1988), 7.

¹⁰⁹ F. Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Bergen and London, 1969).

The role of ambiguity in the creation of boundaries is highlighted in the phenomenological approach of Mary Douglas on the notions of purity and the impure Other. For Douglas perception is organized into patterns. Ambiguity, either defined as a character of statement capable of two interpretations, or closer to anomaly as an element which does not fit a given set or series, threatens the established patterning of perception. From an analysis of a passage from Leviticus, Douglas concludes that “the underlying principle of cleanliness in animals is that they shall conform fully to their class. Those species are unclean which are imperfect members of their class or whose class itself confounds the general scheme of the world”.¹¹⁰ However, despite their validity, Douglas’s acute remarks do not provide adequate explanation about the processes that presuppose patterning, and in this view, classification maintains a sense of neutrality. In a later work, Douglas qualifies her thesis arguing that each social environment sets limits to the possibilities of remoteness and nearness of other humans and limits the costs and rewards of group allegiance to and conformity to social categories.¹¹¹

Ambiguity becomes a threat when classification and maintenance of boundaries are governed by an authoritarian impetus. From a psychological point of view Edward Shils relates authoritarian individuals with the concept of the intolerance of ambiguity. Similarly Milton Rokeach argues that authoritarian persons form unambiguous judgments which rigidly separate, into distinct categories, objects of approval and those of disapproval.¹¹² Therefore, the imposition of order requires clarification of ambiguity, for ambiguity can be seen as a form of transgression. As J. Davis notes, “the greater the search for conformity, the greater the search for deviance; for without deviance, there is not self-consciousness of conformity and vice-versa”.¹¹³ To this it may be added that the greater the search for conformity, the greater the need for clarifying ambiguity.

The process of clarifying ambiguities is inextricably related to the operation of the Inquisition. The process of othering emerges from the process of conformity,

¹¹⁰ M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 2002) (1st published 1966), 37, 38, 57.

¹¹¹ M. Douglas, *Natural Symbols. Explorations in Cosmology* (London, 1970).

¹¹² E. Shils, “Authoritarianism: ‘right’ and ‘left’”, in *Studies in the Scope and Method of the Authoritarian Personality: Continuities in Social Research*, ed. R. Christie and M. Jahoda (Glencoe 1954), 41-2; M. Rokeach, *The Open and Closed Mind. Investigations into the Nature of Belief Systems and Personality Systems* (New York, 1960).

¹¹³ J. Davis, *Fear, Myth and History. The Ranters and the Historians* (Cambridge, 1986), 95-6.

creating notions such as “normal” and deviant, “exclusion” and “inclusion”, “self” and “Other”. However, the clarification of the ambiguous internal Other, be it crypto-Jew, crypto-Muslim, or convert, was not an issue exclusively related to and produced by the disciplinary institution. As Michel de Certeau notices,

the ‘ways of operating’ constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production. [...] the goal is to perceive and analyze the microbe-like operations proliferating within technocratic structures and deflecting their functioning by means of a multitude of ‘tactics’ articulated in the details of everyday life;...the goal is not to make clearer how the violence of order is transmuted into a disciplinary technology, but rather to bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of ‘discipline’.¹¹⁴

In this sense, the clarification of crypto-Judaism and crypto-Islam might be seen as the exercise of power on the part of the Inquisition, but also the presence of converts and witnesses or accusers can be seen as an appropriation of the need for clarification of ambiguity already sought and created by a disciplinary mechanism. In this context, the role of witnesses and accusers, the discourse of the institution and the defense strategies of the accused, all have their part in the clarification of the ambiguous Other. The operation of the Inquisition not merely as a one-way process but in its entity, involving the role of witnesses, accusers and accused persons, fits into the notion of governmentality, as is defined by Michel Foucault in one of his last works, where he modifies the emphasis he had put on the techniques of domination in his earlier studies: “Governing people, in the broad meaning of the word, governing people is not a way to force people to do what the governor wants; it is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by oneself”.¹¹⁵

The inextricable relation between the Self and the Other, in our case between the disciplinary apparatus and the subject under discipline – the crypto-Jewish, the crypto-Muslim and the converted Other – brings us to a fundamental question which

¹¹⁴ M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall (Berkeley and London, 1984), xiv.

¹¹⁵ M. Foucault, “About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self (1980)”, in Carrette, *Religion and Culture*, 162.

has been central in the study of the colonized Other in the realm of subaltern and postcolonial studies: the role of hegemonic culture in shaping the image of the Other on the basis of hegemonic recognition and values. In other words, in the representation of Otherness and the modes of communicating Otherness the voice of the object vanishes.¹¹⁶ In a perceptive article on the colonial subaltern's consciousness and agency, and the investigator's transparency, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak responds negatively to the question "Can the subaltern speak?".¹¹⁷ The practice of representation, or more importantly the process of reporting Other people through the creation of concepts, categories and descriptions (i.e. European, Oriental) under unequal hegemonic power relations precludes the use of dominant narratives as a "window" to "reality".

Similarly, we can transfer these remarks to the realm of early modern inquisitorial, or other judicial procedures and institutions, and ask whether the accused persons can speak. This sort of skepticism has been highlighted by Mario Sbriccoli who has maintained that what judicial records tell us is mainly the workings of courts, the judges' mentality and the repressive technology.¹¹⁸ The categories of Otherness, created first at the level of accusers and witnesses and second at the level of the workings of the tribunal itself, preclude the use of accused persons' narratives as transparent accounts of their lives and experience. Thus, the "voice" of the oppressed subject cannot be easily discerned and subjective agency cannot be retrieved.

However, the challenge that the creation of categories poses in the field of Europe's external Other, seen in the context of the Inquisition allows us to decipher a path for tackling the problem of the accused persons' voice. Echoing Foucault, Spivak writes: "useful is the sustained and developing work on the mechanics of the constitution of the Other; we can use it to much greater analytic and interventionist advantages than invocations of the authenticity of the Other".¹¹⁹ Instead of transparency, we might still be able to see the Other within the categories which constitute Otherness. Furthermore, contrary to descriptions of the non-European

¹¹⁶ M. Harbsmeier, "Early Travels to Europe: Some Remarks on the Magic of Writing", in Barker, *Europe and its Others*, 72 – 86.

¹¹⁷ G. Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago, 1988), 271-313.

¹¹⁸ M. Sbriccoli, "Fonti giudiziarie e fonti giuridiche. Riflessioni sulla fase attuale degli studi di storia del crimine e della giustizia criminale", *Studi storici*, 29 (1988): 491 – 501.

¹¹⁹ Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", 294.

Other, the Inquisition wanted to hear and registered the voice of those under investigation. The voice exists as a snapshot, and as such it might be seen within the creation of categories. Thus, there is still some use of the Other's "forced discourse" if seen from a particular angle, that is "how men and women construct their "experience" within a dialectic of power", as Lyndal Roper has argued.¹²⁰ We might get some glimpses into the way accused persons coped with, challenged or conformed to the categories of understanding, which inquisitorial power created and imposed. In a sense, we might be able to discern the accused persons' articulation of a fragmentary "counter-discourse".

The Inquisition as a disciplinary apparatus can be seen as a "workshop" of identity formation-construction. "Identity norms", as E. Goffman writes, "breed deviations as well as conformance".¹²¹ Drawing on insights from cultural studies and social psychology, my Thesis examines the identities primarily of the accused persons, and in a more implicit way the identities of accusers and witnesses, not so much as fixed and firmly established but as fluid, negotiable and under configuration.¹²² Furthermore, the Thesis traces aspects of the inquisitorial discourse and practice, which were not from the beginning as uniform and rigid as is usually assumed, but they gradually crystallised.

Although my Thesis does not fall into the category of microhistory (in the sense that it does not deal with reconstructing the lives and beliefs of a few extraordinary individuals and it covers the time-span of more than a century), the process of categorization and negotiation is highlighted through two main techniques borrowed from microhistory and Clifford Geertz's "thick description" in interpretive anthropology: by reducing the scale of "observation" and by close textual analysis. As far as these techniques are concerned, microhistory and interpretive anthropology partly overlap; for Geertz, ethnographic description is microscopic.¹²³ Microhistorians like Giovanni Levi have recognized their influence from Geertz's

¹²⁰ L. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil. Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1994), 55.

¹²¹ Goffman, *Stigma*, 154.

¹²² See for instance, S. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. J. Rutherford (London, 1990), 222-37; J. Shotter and K. J. Gergen, eds., *Texts of Identity* (London, 1989).

¹²³ C. Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture", in his *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays* (London, 1993) (1st published 1973), 21.

thick description.¹²⁴ Wolfgang Reinhard has argued that a microhistorical analysis informed by anthropological notions might be the most fruitful way in examining the post-Tridentine social discipline campaign at the level of its application.¹²⁵ Furthermore, microanalysis which has been favourable in studies of judicial records, where narrative and storytelling elements are dominant, allows insights into the dimensions and limits (“the latent possibilities” in Carlo Ginzburg’s words) of social and cultural norms in which subaltern groups and obscure individuals participated.¹²⁶

Small-scale observation and close analysis are complementary and closely related techniques which only as a set can be workable and meaningful. One technique does not necessarily presuppose the other. As Peter Burke points out “the reduction in scale does not thicken a narrative by itself”.¹²⁷ It is the combination of the two techniques that might provide a more adequate solution for works that rely heavily on trial testimonies as sources and narrative as a means of analysis and, at the same time, they might reduce the risk pointed out in Thomas Kuehn’s criticism of some microhistorical works (particularly G. Brucker’s *Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence*) for “making the Other into the Same” and reductiveness.¹²⁸

Through the reduction of the scale of “observation” and close textual analysis, with a flavour of Geertzian “thick description”, the identity of the crypto-Jewish and crypto-Muslim Other and the Inquisition’s workings emerge not with a priori characteristics but as a result of a dialogic process. This approach emphasizes that “facts” are not only discovered but they are also constructed. As Giovanni Levi has pointed out, “individuals constantly create their own identities, and groups define themselves according to conflicts and solidarities which, cannot be assumed a priori

¹²⁴ G. Levi, “On Microhistory”, in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. P. Burke, 2nd (Cambridge, 2001), 102.

¹²⁵ W. Reinhard, “Disciplinamento sociale, confessionalizzazione, modernizzazione. Un discorso storiografico”, in *Disciplina dell’anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. P. Prodi (Bologna, 1994), 101-23.

¹²⁶ E. Muir, “Introduction: Observing Trifles”; C. Ginzburg and C. Poni, “The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace”, in *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, ed. E. Muir and G. Ruggiero, trans. E. Branch (Baltimore and London, 1991), xiv - xvi, 7 - 9; Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, xxi.

¹²⁷ P. Burke, “History of Events and the Revival of the Narrative”, in Burke, *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 293.

¹²⁸ T. Kuehn, “Reading Microhistory. The Example of *Giovanni and Lusanna*”, *Journal of Modern History*, 61 (1989): 512-34.

but result from dynamics which are the object of analysis".¹²⁹ So the categories of crypto-Jews, crypto-Muslims and converts cannot be simply compared as such; small-scale observation and close analysis should proceed and it is only through the specific mode of analysis that these identities can emerge. The objects of analysis are not simply "out there" but it is the specific analysis that renders them apparent, or as Hayden White has put it, the facts are not found but they are "constructed by modes of representation and techniques of discoursivization".¹³⁰

Although Geertz's "thick description" and interpretation provide a fruitful means of analysis, his structural notion of culture as semiotic or as webs of significance (the term "cultural system" is indicative) needs some further elaboration. The Geertzian textualised concept of culture denotes coherence, harmonization and consistence. Such a notion perhaps allows in-depth insights in cultural analysis (the story of the endless series of turtles which support the world, as quoted by Geertz is perhaps relevant) but for a kind of horizontal analysis such a homogenized concept of culture creates more problems than it intends to solve.

The Geertzian distinction between cultural system and social system reduces the performative aspect of culture. Structure and event need to come together in order to be more workable for a historical inquiry. Marshall Sahlins's modification of Geertz's static cultural analysis can be helpful. With Sahlins's "signs in action" categories and values become situationally deployed. In this view, signs either reproduce or transform the original meaning. According to Sahlins, "in action, people put their concepts and categories into ostensive relations to the world. Such referential uses bring into play other determinations of the signs, besides their received sense, namely the actual world and the people concerned".¹³¹ As in Geertz's notion culture is a text, Sahlins's signs are also 'texts', bearers of meaning. In the same vein, for Pierre Bourdieu structure and event are also in a dialectical relation: "objective structures are themselves products of historical practices".¹³² Through these remarks we can reach William Sewell's notion that "system and practice are complementary concepts: each presupposes the other. To engage in cultural practice

¹²⁹ Levi, "On Microhistory", 109.

¹³⁰ H. White, "Afterword", in *Beyond the Cultural Turn. New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, ed. V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt (Berkeley and London, 1999), 322.

¹³¹ M. Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago, 1985), 125, 149.

¹³² P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, 1977), 72, 73, 95, 83.

means to utilize existing cultural symbols to accomplish some end”.¹³³ Thus, the homogenized notion of culture is modified and cultural symbols are open to redefinition, contestation and possible change, and we can examine what Michel de Certeau puts as “the construction of individual sentences with an established vocabulary and syntax”.¹³⁴

Structure of the Thesis

The Thesis consists of four chapters. The first and second chapters examine offences relating to Judaism and particularly focus on those suspected of judaizing who were of Iberian origin, the so-called Marranos.¹³⁵ This part of the Thesis is based on the multi-volume transcripts of Jewish *processi* published by Ioly Zorattini (thirty cases are analysed including the major and longest trials against Judaizers). This accessible corpus of documents provides opportunities for new readings and interpretative insights on material and, by including additional trials against Venetian Judaizers conducted in Inquisitions in Spain and Portugal, offers pieces of information on the lives of these obscure individuals. The third and fourth chapters analyse offences involving Islam. The material consists of Inquisition documents drawn from the Venetian State and Patriarchal Archives (seventy five cases are discussed) and records of the *Pia Casa dei Catecumeni* [The House of Converts and Catechumens] kept in the Patriarchal Archive. The latter comprises register books recording Muslim and Jewish converts’ admission, baptism and departure date from the Catecumeni, often accompanied with personal data on the converts (age, language, place of origin) and comments by the Catecumeni’s Priors on the converts’ conduct

¹³³ W. H. Sewell, Jr, “The Concept(s) of Culture”, in Bonnell and Hunt, *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, 47.

¹³⁴ Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xiii

¹³⁵ “Marrano” was a word of vague meaning and use. A Spanish derogatory term meaning pig, which at least from the Church’s viewpoint referred to Spanish and Portuguese Jews who had converted to Christianity but practiced Judaism in secret, Foa, *The Jews of Europe*, 162 – 63. But the papal nuncio in Venice gave a broader meaning in 1574 referring to all baptised Jews from Iberia as Marranos: “many baptised Marranos who have returned to Judaism...”. According to another definition by John Florio, “Marrano” was “a nick-name for Spaniards, that is, one descended of Jewes or Infidels and whose Parents were never christened, but for to save their goods will say they are Christians”, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 172, 206. Finally, the jurist Marquardo de Susannis portrayed the Marranos as detached from any religious affiliation: “Licet posset etiam allegari quarta species infidelium, videlicet, Maranos, ita vulgo appellatos, qui nullam colunt religionem...”, quoted in *Processi* (1548 – 1560), Introduction, 15.

during and after their residence in the institution. The registers cover the period from the late sixteenth to the late seventeenth century, although there are some lacunae.

With Marranism, and crypto-Muslim practices being its foci, the Thesis develops along two strands. Following a close textual analysis of the verbal exchange in the tribunal, the Thesis examines the role of witnesses and the interaction between Inquisitors and defendants. A largely neglected source, accusers' and witnesses' depositions are used to elucidate the way these people reported, identified and perceived the deviated culture and practices of alleged crypto-Jews and crypto-Muslims – in Guido Ruggiero's words "the decisions that individuals and groups make within the webs of values, beliefs, and ideologies; of the play of the personal within fields of power that discipline and control".¹³⁶ Various testimonies coming from people of different status, social position and origin highlight how much witnesses' discourse on religious deviance was based on, and emanated from, Catholic self-fashionings of religious identity, and collective imagery of Jewish and Muslim Otherness; or attempted to grasp non-Catholic practices and beliefs and incorporate them. Whatever distortions appeared are considered as inherent to witnesses' discourse and perceptions. Their potential development and "refining" are examined in the period from the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century, when Venice's Catholic population became aware of, and preoccupied with, religious dissent and unorthodox conduct, as they were defined in the post-Tridentine years.

At another level, with reference to the same offences along with cases involving readmission to Catholicism of individuals who had converted to Islam, the Thesis studies the interrogation procedure and the encounters between Inquisitors and defendants. Crypto-Jewish and crypto-Muslim *processi* are in some way complementary, because they not only involved the offence of crypto-religious adherence under the Catholic guise but also covered the period from the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century. As full trials of crypto-Jews stopped in the late 1580s, crypto-Muslim trials of the first half of the seventeenth century provide insights into developments of the Inquisition's discourse and practice which were underway already in the sixteenth-century crypto-Jewish cases. Again a close textual analysis highlights the Inquisitors' attempt to handle cases of crypto-Jewish and crypto-Muslim practices and the defendants' endeavour to avoid punishment. The

¹³⁶ Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, 223.

tribunal's practice and discourse on specific offences are not often addressed in Inquisition studies and my analysis illustrates that inquisitorial procedure, including both the interrogation of defendants and sentencing policy, was far from monolithic. But as the years went by and more cases appeared, the Inquisitors, having been on a learning process, became more aware and thoughtful, their discourse more refined and "enriched" and their approach firmer but also adaptive according to the case ranging from prosecution to coercive "correction".

Defendants, on the other hand, were not merely passive under the tribunal's procedure. As long as the discourse articulated by the tribunal was on a gradual "development", loopholes and leeway were available and were manipulated by defendants to develop their defence and save themselves. But obviously the power relationship between Inquisitors and defendants was unequal. This was reflected on the Inquisition records; the defendants' testimonies are distorted not only by judicial technicalities but also by the inquisitorial procedure, the Inquisitor's preoccupations and aims, translated in his questions, which were different from those of the defendants. The defendants' "voice" is indirectly reflected in the documents.¹³⁷ In this view, the defendants' testimonies are not treated as transparent accounts of reality. Facing a repressive mechanism, the defendants' testimonies are seen more as tactical.

Finally, tactical depositions are further illustrated in my analysis of the narratives of persons from Venice, Italy and across the Mediterranean, who spontaneously appeared before the Inquisition to seek absolution and conciliation to the Church after having been voluntarily or forcibly converted to Islam. My approach to the inquisitorial proceedings of voluntary appearance draws on the insights of Natalie Z. Davis into the letters of remission in sixteenth century France. As with those letters, the spontaneous depositions were "collaborative efforts" in the sense that some preliminary consultation would have taken place between the members of the tribunal and the convert for explaining the procedure and giving some sort of guidance, before the final and official confrontation with the tribunal where the convert told his story and the notary wrote it down. Nevertheless, the variety of the depositions suggests that the notaries' and officials' intervention was limited.

¹³⁷ A. del Col, *Domenico Scandella Known as Menocchio. His Trials Before the Inquisition (1583 – 1599)*, trans. J. and A. Tedeschi (Binghamton, 1997), xli – xlix; Astarita, *Village Justice*, xviii.

Recorded within the realm of officialdom and, to some extent, framed by official procedures, the depositions of the prospective converts still reflect their social norms and cultural values, and allow some insights, as the prospective convert was the first “author”, and the final word of what to include in the narrative and the points to stress remained at their disposal. It could be said that within the context of inquisitorial procedure, the converts, because of their spontaneous appearance, overturned the power relation between the authority of the interrogator and vulnerable position of the interrogated.¹³⁸ Finally, the examination of this hitherto largely neglected aspect of inquisitorial activity which mainly appeared in the first half of the seventeenth century indicates the later bureaucratic and mediating nature of the Inquisition, as its earlier major preoccupations gradually waned, its wider “appeal” and its role that might have been more rooted in Venice’s everyday social life.

In Chapter One, the denouncers and witnesses’ extensive testimonies provide the material for analysing the articulation of discourse on alleged crypto-Jews and emergence of perceptions through officially established signs of the Jewish Other and “unofficially” criteria based on social interaction and prevailing cultural norms amidst the Catholic population of Venice. Comparisons are drawn between testimonies coming from Venetian witnesses, Spanish and Portuguese who lived in Venice, and Jewish ones. The witnesses’ manifold, distorted and vague understanding of the word “Marrano” is also discussed. The chapter examines witnesses’ reports and perceptions in a period of more than a century and traces their strengthening and circulation in the urban landscape of Venice. Examining rumours about crypto-Jewish behaviour the chapter offers insights into the years and areas that witnessed the most concrete and hostile attitude to Judaizers. Finally it addresses the extent to which crypto-Judaism became a serious concern for people in Venice and the aspects of Judaism that caused more concern.

Chapter Two brings to the fore the encounters between Inquisitors and alleged Marranos. Through some key-cases, which were those hearings that turned to full trials, the chapter unfolds and analyses the steady development and focus of inquisitorial discourse on Marranism and the tribunal’s ranging approach.

¹³⁸ N. Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 1988), 5, 18, 20, 23, 25.

Comparisons are also drawn between the Inquisition's policy on Marranism and other offences involving Judaism. The chapter illustrates the defendants' position and defence strategy and their potential to manipulate the tribunal's changing procedure.

Chapter Three moves to offences relating to Islam, which sprang from the growing Levantine presence in Venice; illicit relations with Muslims, apostasy and crypto-Muslim practices. The Inquisition records are a mine of information and together with other material the chapter initially provides a new exploration of the presence of Levantine Christians and Muslims in Venice. It offers insights into relations between different groups, their status and their residential patterns, and it draws some comparisons between the different alien communities of Venice. Then, the chapter examines testimonies of witnesses and accusers who were preoccupied with suspicious relations between Christians and Muslims and it delineates aspects of witnesses' perceptions of the Muslim Other. Finally, the chapter studies the Inquisitors' response to offences involving Islam and the discourse articulated in the tribunal on cases of crypto-Muslim adherence elucidating practices that had employed in earlier cases of Marranism.

Chapter Four deals with another aspect of Islam. Individuals of Christian background who had converted to Islam in Ottoman lands or northern Africa and later they sought reconciliation with the Church through the Inquisition – the so-called *sponte comparenti*. It also examines native-born Muslims who approached the *Casa dei Catecumeni* to convert to Christianity. The chapter studies the Inquisition's approach to prospective converts, its discourse on their ambiguous identity and a wider transformation in inquisitorial activity as reflected on Inquisition manuals, and instructions on the *sponte comparenti*. The chapter analyses the stories the *sponte comparenti* told before the Inquisition and the strategies they employed to convince the tribunal. Some common patterns of social identity among the Christian and Muslim prospective converts are traced, as many had a military background, offering some insights into the obscure world of mercenaries employed in the Venetian army. Finally, from a wider perspective, viewing Venice as a hub of religious conversion, the chapter aims to illustrate how some subaltern groups of people in the Mediterranean coped with conditions of existential insecurity.

Some chapters and subchapters of the Thesis were presented in earlier versions as papers at the following conferences: "Witnesses, Rumours and Religious Deviance:

The Shaping of Crypto-Jewish Identity in the Inquisition in Venice, 1550 – 1680”, *Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference. Interrogating Hearsay: Rumours and Gossip in Historical Perspective, 1500 – 2003*, Department of History, University of Essex, 26 July 2003. “Christian and Muslim Converts from the Balkans in Early Modern Venice: Patterns of Social and Cultural Mobility and Identities”, *Developing Cultural Identity in the Balkans: Convergence vs. Divergence*, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Ghent (Belgium), 12 – 13 December 2003. “Encountering a Culture of Deviance: Witnesses before the Inquisition in Venice and Perceptions of Crypto-Judaism, *Social History Society Annual Conference*, University of Rouen (France), 8 – 10 January 2004. “Crossing Religious Boundaries in Early Modern Venice: Christian and Muslim Renegades”, *7th Annual Congress of the Mediterranean Studies Association*, University of Barcelona, 26 – 29 May 2004.

Witnesses before the Inquisition and Perceptions of Crypto – Judaism

In theory, procedural manuals on the proper conduct of trials by the tribunals of the Roman Inquisition distinguished two ways in the institution of hearings. The first way was by denunciation [*Primo modo di fare il processo per via di denuntia*]; the second one was at the Inquisitor's discretion [*Secondo modo di formare il processo per via d'inquisitione*] to initiate an inquiry by the right of his office after rumours [*fama, e voce publica*] about heretical activities have come under his notice.¹ The provision that the Inquisitor should act *ex officio* when rumours were circulating probably had more value in theory than in practice.² Among other things, the

¹ E. Masini, *Sacro Arsenale overo Pratica dell'Officio della Santa Inquisitione. Di nuovo corretto & ampliato*, 1st edn 1621(Genova and Perugia, 1653), 24 – 31. Masini's manual was widely read and had at least ten publications during the seventeenth century, A. Errera, *Processus in causa fidei. L'evoluzione dei manuali inquisitoriali nei secoli XVI-XVIII e il manuale inedito di un inquisitore perugino* (Bologna, 2000), 264 – 5. It can be considered as the manual that most successfully codified the procedures of the Roman Inquisition at least after the 1580s, as the author served as Inquisitor in Genoa from 1609 to 1627; N. Eymeric's medieval manual distinguished three methods in opening inquisitorial proceedings: by accusation in which the accuser had to prove the accusation and inscribed him/herself *ad poenam talionis*, by denunciation, and on the Inquisitor's initiative: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 92 – 3; this medieval tradition survived in late sixteenth century manuals, which drew heavily on Eymeric's authority. Vincenzo Castrucci's *Fundamentum processus conficiendi in causa Fidei* (1596) still followed Eymeric: Errera, *Processus in causa fidei*, 311 – 15; however, Masini's manual that reflected the actual practice in the tribunals of the Inquisition, superseded the distinction [*tralasciando quel modo, ch'è per via d'accusa, sì perche rare volte occorre, sì anco perche è quasi il medesimo, che questo per via di denuntia*]: *Sacro Arsenale*, 24; on rumours and crypto-Jews, see below 47– 55.

² Inquisition theorists often elaborated on the value of rumours as potential source for inquisitorial investigations: U. Locati, *Praxis iudiciaria inquisitorum*, 2nd edn (Venice, 1583), 106 – 7; Q. Mandosius and P. Ventramenus, *Repertorium inquisitorum pravitatis haereticae, in quo omnia, quae ad haeresum cognitionem, ac S. Inquisitionis forum pertinent, continentur*, 2nd edn (Venice, 1588), 336 – 37; rumours were also considered instrumental in proceedings in secular courts. Venice's *Esecutori contro la bestemmia* approach to rumours was codified by one of the magistracy's officials Marcantonio Tirabosco in his Criminal Handbook [*Prattica criminale*]. Occasionally rumours played an important role in the substance of a crime: R. Derosas, "Moralità e giustizia a Venezia nel '500-'600. Gli Esecutori contro la Bestemmia", in *Stato società e giustizia nella repubblica veneta (sec. xv - xviii)*, ed. G. Cozzi (Rome, 1980), 462 – 67, 527 – 28.

tribunals of the Roman Inquisition were often underfinanced and consequently this prevented them from expanding their activities, as they may have wished. In Venice, perhaps one of the few cases, if not the unique, in which the Inquisitor acted by right of office was in 1473. At that time, the medieval tribunal of the Venetian Inquisition was still in existence but almost inactive. The Inquisitor investigated rumours according to which “many Christians in Venice observed Jewish rites”, referring in all probability to crypto-Jews.³ Later, at the time of the Roman Inquisition, the overwhelming majority of hearings were the result of denunciations either anonymously written or presented by delators before the tribunal.⁴

Evidently, to accomplish its tasks in uprooting heretical activities and modify deviant behaviour, the Inquisition relied on the mobilisation and collaboration of ordinary people, both the laity and clergy, who would serve as accusers and witnesses.⁵ Lay confraternities dedicated to the combat against heresy did not develop in Venice, as in other Italian cities, although, even there, their actual involvement is unclear.⁶ As this chapter will show, in cases of Judaizers a variety of people appeared before the Venetian Inquisition as delators and witnesses, ranging from neighbours and co-parishioners, business associates, domestic servants and compatriots to parish priests.⁷ Particularly for the clergy, their role appears to have been more important not as confessors but through the authority that they might have enjoyed in their parishes or their vigilant role in the parish or the neighbourhood.⁸

The denunciations and testimonies of witnesses constitute the most extensive parts of inquisitorial hearings. Either in complete trials or in hearings which the tribunal initiated, and where preliminary investigations and interrogations never led to the accused being examined, testimonies are the most constant feature of the inquisitorial proceedings. Nevertheless, for obvious reasons, Inquisition studies have

³ Processi (1548 – 1560), Appendice Documentaria, 339.

⁴ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 93 – 4.

⁵ The role of clerics, especially the confessors is emphasised in A. Prosperi, “L’inquisitore come confessore”, in Prodi, *Disciplina dell’anima*, 187 – 224; in cases of Judaizers in Venice it seems that the role of confessors was limited: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 101; also for Venice: J. Martin, “Out of the Shadow: Heretical and Catholic Women in Renaissance Venice”, *Journal of Family History*, 10, 1 (1985): 25 – 7.

⁶ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 100; C. F. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1989), 76 – 7,

⁷ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 100 – 7.

mainly dealt with those individuals who broke with Catholicism under the influence of the Reformation, or who practised what the Church gradually found deviant and unacceptable, or who had been forced to accept Catholicism, and who were finally judged by the Inquisition. Indeed, for the great majority of those who were accused, the Inquisition is perhaps the only known recorder of a few instances of their life.⁹

The Inquisition is also the unique recorder of all those persons from different social ranking that appeared as accusers or witnesses. Their words which the Inquisition's notaries meticulously wrote down and the tribunal preserved in the dossiers of trials, are a valuable source that gives us the opportunity to get some glimpses into the world of Venetian parishes and of neighbours who gradually came to recognise people who did not conform to the norms prescribed by the post-Tridentine Church and the Venetian state; "the Trojan horse", as an anonymous accuser referred to some alleged crypto-Jews in 1555.¹⁰ Of the documents that criminal courts produced and have come down to us, those of the Inquisition appear to have been among the most complete. For instance, compared to the documents of the Venetian magistracy of the *Esecutori contro la bestemmia*, the competence of which overlapped in some aspects that of the Inquisition, the inquisitorial *processi* included the unfolding of a hearing through all of its stages.¹¹

Focusing on the witnesses' testimonies, this chapter sets out to describe and analyse what those persons understood and identified with crypto-Judaism, one of the lesser offences that came before the Inquisition. The interest of such an analysis does not lay only in the truthfulness and reliability of the testimonies.¹² Surely, many depositions, especially those at the initial stages of a hearing that instituted the accusation were biased. Nevertheless, the testimonies were imbued with cultural

⁸ On Venetian parish clergy, N. S. Davidson, "The Clergy of Venice in the Sixteenth Century", *Bulletin of the Society for Renaissance Studies*, 2 (1984): 19 – 31; see the role of parish priests in the case of the De Nis family, 16, 20, 26, 27, 53, 55.

⁹ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, xiv.

¹⁰ Processi (1561 – 1570), 74; on this case involving Duarte Gomez and Agostinho Enrichez, below, 25, 49, 63, 70, 75, 83 – 9, 118.

¹¹ The surviving 218 sentences that the Esecutori passed between 1550 and 1570 provide scarce information, let alone evidence on the development of the proceedings: E. Horodowich, "Civic Identity and the Control of Blasphemy in Sixteenth-Century Venice", *Past and Present*, 181 (2003): 18.

¹² For an attempt to reconstruct the religious customs that crypto-Jews strove to observe in Venice, through witnesses' testimonies: P. C. Ioly Zorattini, "Derekh Teshuvah: La via del ritorno", in *L'identità dissimulata. Giudaizzanti iberici nell'Europa cristiana dell'età moderna*, ed. P. C. Ioly Zorattini (Florence, 2000), 195 – 248.

values and ideological meaning, and the degree of their reliability does not affect the norms that ruled them. The testimonies offer us some glimpses into the latent possibilities and the limits that were available to ordinary Venetians for the presentation of the image of the crypto-Jew. Although shaped by the witnesses' skill in weaving their narrative, the testimonies were polyphonic documents, as the entire trials too;¹³ testimonies filtered, among many things, collective anxieties, neighbourhood gossip, the views of other people who participated in the evidence-gathering process, official and unofficial definitions of deviant behaviour and local practices, and customs. More generally, the testimonies drew on a cultural repertoire of social and cultural modes in a situational context; over the years the modes and conventions might have changed, been enriched, abandoned or modified. In this sense, the witnesses' depositions cannot be reduced to language alone; they are products and reflections of will, agency and social experience.¹⁴

In their attempt to identify crypto-Jews witnesses employed a range of criteria. The criteria were not always identical or unanimously accepted. Other times, the same criteria were not always identified with crypto-Judaism. In this view, there was no fixed, permanent subject status for crypto-Jews. But, in any case, the criteria were deeply embedded in the fabric of social and cultural life of Venice. Identity formation of the religious Other was the result of social interaction and social signification through which people in Venice gave real meaning to their lives.¹⁵

Beyond the confrontation between the Inquisition and the alleged crypto-Jews, there was the broader community that sought to regulate any deviant conduct. The important role of the community is available to us only through the testimonies they offered to the tribunal. The distortive nature of the depositions should not be ignored. The interrogator's questions, the conformity to legal rules, the intervention of the tribunal's officials provided a framework to the depositions and, in some cases, may have tailored them. On the other hand, depositions at the early stages of the proceedings can also be seen as being those that provided the framework to the

¹³ Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, 14.

¹⁴ For a similar approach to testimonies and supplications from judicial records of the Venetian Patriarchal Court dealing with marriage disputes: J. M. Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford and New York, 2001), esp. 4 – 13.

¹⁵ On the value of interactionist sociology for the study of urban life in Renaissance: R. F. E. Weissman, "Reconstructing Renaissance Sociology: The 'Chicago School' and the Study of

Inquisition for its subsequent action. Witnesses' testimonies served as the necessary intermediaries between the authority of the tribunal and the daily life of the community. Nevertheless, as intermediaries, the witnesses' testimonies were far from neutral, leaning in most cases towards the side of the authority.

How much awareness of Judaism existed among the people of Venice is hard to gauge. A denunciation of 1555 against Duarte Gomez and Agostinho Enrichez clearly reproduced the Venetian state's position on Marranos after the decree for their expulsion in 1550:

If Enrichez and Gomez are Jews, they must be punished because they are dressed in the Christian manner and live outside the Ghetto. If they are Christians, they must be punished because they do not live as Christians, by not having a Cross nor a Christ nor a saint in their house, nor do they communicate, or ever enter church, and they eat meat on prohibited days. If they are Marranos, they must be punished too, because they live in Venice, although the law has expelled them.¹⁶

But few testimonies were so well defined. Some groups of people, such as Christians, who frequented the Ghettos for business, appear to have been quite aware of Jewish tenets and, surely, customs.¹⁷ But for many people, Judaism existed only within the walls of the Ghetto areas.

On certain occasions the Venetian authorities did not miss the opportunity to provide the public with some anti-Jewish spectacle. In 1553, in accordance with papal policy, the Council of Ten ordered the public burning of copies of the Talmud in the Piazza S. Marco and in 1568, the *Esecutori contro la bestemmia* proceeded to the burning of thousands of Hebrew titles.¹⁸ However, it is not easy to determine how much such public expressions of anti-Jewish sentiment determined ordinary people's ability to produce a well-defined image of crypto-Jews, or they just contributed to an increasing awareness of the boundaries, physical and ideological, that separated the

Renaissance Society", in *Persons in Groups. Social Behavior as Identity Formation in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, ed. R. C. Trexler (Binghamton, N.Y., 1985), 39 – 46.

¹⁶ Processi (1561 – 1570), 73 – 4: "Se d'Hebrei deno haver pena per haver habito christiano et non star nel ghetto, se de Christiani deno parimente esser puniti perché non vivono da Christiani per non haver croce nè Christo nè santo alcuno in casa sue nè comunicarsi nè mai andar in chiesa et mangiar nei giorni prohibiti carne. Se sono marani medesimamente deno esser puniti per la legge che vuole che li Marani siano banditi dalla nostra città"; on the decree of 1550, below 81 – 3.

¹⁷ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 163 – 64.

¹⁸ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 91 – 3; idem, "The Destruction of Hebrew Books in Venice, 1568", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 45 (1978): 103 – 30.

dominant Christian and subordinate Jewish community in Venice. In this light, witnesses' testimonies on alleged crypto-Jews allow us to examine the extent to which neophytes and crypto-Jews may have contributed to an increasing awareness of the Jewish Other.¹⁹

The Jewish Headgear and Dress as Signs of Crypto – Judaism

The official classification between Christians and Jews, grounded on the different dress codes, constituted for some witnesses a standard point of reference in identifying crypto-Judaism. In Venice, as elsewhere in Italy, dress-code underlined values and norms that ranged from social ranking to marital status, reputation and origin.²⁰ In his etiquette manual, Giovanni della Casa, nuncio in Venice in 1544 - 49, highlighted the association of social status, and local custom with the dress-code: "Everyone must dress well according to his status [...] a man must also try to adapt himself as much as he can to the sartorial style of other citizens and let custom guide him..."²¹ In such a context, the religious Other had its own place too.

After 1516 when the Venetian government allowed the residence of Jews in the city, the authorities assiduously put forward and monitored legislation that fostered the separation of the Jewish from the Christian population. The legislation included the observance of curfew time for the opening and closure of the Ghetto areas and the distinction of the Jews by particular colours or clothes that they were obliged to wear. The Venetian authorities' requirement was based on the Catholic Church's decree in the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 that "Jews and Saracens of both sexes in every Christian province and at all times shall be marked off in the eyes of the public from other people through the character of their dress".²²

Even before the establishment of the first Venetian Ghetto in 1516, when the Senate at the end of the fourteenth century had allowed the presence of Jewish

¹⁹ R. Bonfil, "Aliens Within: The Jews and AntiJudaism", in *Handbook of European History, 1400 – 1600. Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 1, *Structures and Assertions*, ed. T. A. Brady, H. A. Oberman, J. D. Tracy (Leiden, 1994), 294 – 96.

²⁰ S. M. Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians 1495 – 1525* (Aldershot, 1988).

²¹ G. della Casa, *Galateo. A Renaissance Treatise on Manners*, ed. and trans. K. Eisenbichler and K. R. Bartlett, 3rd edn (Toronto, 1994), 41.

²² G. Kisch, "The Yellow Badge in History", *Historia Judaica*, 19, 2 (1957): 101 – 14, 131 – 2.

moneylenders in the city for a limited period, the authorities required them to wear a yellow circle on their clothes. Later legislation extended the requirement to both sexes and to all Jews either on the mainland or through the *stato da mar*. But as the yellow circle was found not to be the appropriate means of distinction, as some Jews often concealed it, in 1496, the Senate decreed that the yellow circle had to be replaced by a yellow headgear [*beretta*].²³ In 1520 when the Senate discussed the renewal of the Jewish moneylenders' charter, the noble Marco Foscari, who favoured the presence of the Jews in the Ghetto, maintained that the distinguishing headgear should be one of the requirements for the Jews' continuing residence.²⁴ Over the next two centuries, the Senate and the *Ufficiali al Cattaver*, the magistracy that supervised the Ghetto, with subsequent legislations pursued the enforcement of the restrictions and the elimination of any possible evasion by the Jews. As late as 1705, the Cattaver was always on stand-by to investigate any misconduct. The magistracy initiated an inquiry into the case of the Jewish butcher Saladin, who was accused of going around with a black hat, but despite the interrogations conducted, the witnesses would not confirm whether his *beretta* had a yellow sign on it or not.²⁵

Occasionally permissions to wear the Christian black hat were granted to Jews, especially doctors, musicians, who were called in Christian feasts, or merchants. In the seventeenth century the successors of David Mavrogonato from Candia were allowed to wear the black hat according to the privileges that the Venetian state had granted to him in the fifteenth century.²⁶ Despite those exceptions, the Republic's magistracies were determined to maintain the permits at a low level. In 1517, in the case of Jewish doctors, the Council of Ten decided to observe more strictly those privileges, as many Jews obtained permissions by claiming falsely to be

²³ B. Ravid, "From Yellow to Red: On the Distinguishing Head – Covering of the Jews of Venice", *Jewish History*, 6 (1992): 183.

²⁴ G. Gullino, "Il discorso di Marco Foscari per la ricondotta degli ebrei a Venezia (3 Marzo 1520)", *Archivio Veneto*, ser. V, 188 (1999): 145.

²⁵ ASV, Ufficiali al Cattaver, b. 127, proc. "Saladin Becher", test. Salamon Forno, 15 May 1705: "Interrogatus se il detto Saladin sia stato veduto da lui in alcun tempo con la Beretta senza il solito segno per essere distinto da Christiani. Respose: Io lo vedo nella sua Beccaria a tagliar la carne, et porta una Beretta, se sia, o non sia segnata non lo so".

²⁶ Ravid, "From Yellow to Red", 196 – 98.

doctors.²⁷ In 1559, the *Capi* of the Council of Ten told the rectors of the University of Padua not to allow Jewish students to wear black hats.²⁸

In 1596, the Patriarch of Venice Girolamo Priuli asked the government to force the Jews to wear an entirely yellow hat, as they sometimes wore black hats with small yellow marks on them, thus making distinction difficult.²⁹ It seems that many Jews preferred to wear hats of black colour with oilcloth attached to them. In 1718, the *Ufficiali al Cattaver* required that if Jews used oilcloth they had to sew it on their hats.³⁰ Finally, at the beginning of the seventeenth century some non-Levantine Jews adopted the red hat, presumably in order to avoid the negative connotations of the yellow one, but the change was first recorded in 1631 in official documents.³¹

As a result, the colour of the headgear played a major role when witnesses accused persons of lapsing into Judaism. In 1621, Jorge Francisco Diaz was denounced for having lived as a Christian in the S. Marcuola parish, Cannaregio, later he returned to Venice and he was seen going around dressed as a Jew. Giacomo Croce, priest of the SS. Ermagora e Fortunato church (S. Marcuola), told the Inquisition that he had seen many Jews visiting the house of the Diaz family while they stayed in S. Marcuola. However, those suspicious activities of the Diaz were not enough for most of their former neighbours in order to regard them as anything but Christians. The message the clothing style transmitted sufficiently covered any misconduct. Croce reported that during their stay in S. Marcuola, the male members of the Diaz family always appeared with the Christian black hat and the neighbours, as the witness too, regarded them as Christians. In the same vein, Leonardo de Nigris, deacon of the SS. Ermagora e Fortunato church (S. Marcuola), testified that although he had never seen any of the Diaz brothers in the church, they dressed in the Christian way with the black hat and they had been widely held for Christians.³²

²⁷ N. E. Vanzan Marchini, "Medici ebrei e assistenza cristiana nella Venezia del '500", *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, April – May 1979: 157.

²⁸ R. Segre, "Sephardic Settlements in Sixteenth-Century Italy: A Historical and Geographical Survey", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 6, 2 (1991): 121.

²⁹ B. Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice. The social institutions of a Catholic state, to 1620* (Oxford, 1971), 557 – 58.

³⁰ ASV, Inquisitorato agli Ebrei, b. 39, in a bundle of papers entitled "Casi a favor Ebrei, e Proclami del Cattaver, Tagliati, o vegiliati".

³¹ Ravid, "From Yellow to Red", 188, 199.

³² Processi (1608 – 1632), 61: "Tutti portavano il capel negro, che mi li vedevo continuamente et allhora tutti portavano il ferrarolo col capel negro, portando anco uno di loro una vestina curta fino al zenochio et allhora da tutti erano tenuti per Christiani"; 62: "In chiesa mi non ho mai veduto detti doi

Subsequently, the change in clothing signified the family's lapsing into Judaism. Giacomo Croce testified that for at least three years he had been seeing one of the brothers with his son going around the city and wearing the red hat that the Jews wore. Their conduct surprised those in the parish who knew the family. On that ground, Croce concluded that the family had become Jews and lived in the Ghetto. Giovanni Francesco Gemma, *aromatarius* in the S. Marcuola area, based his judgement on clothing too, and testified that he had seen Jorge Francisco Diaz and his two sons going around dressed as Jews with the red hat.³³

The message that the distinguishing headgear conveyed was often the strongest sign of identification of people, for whom no other pattern of conduct indicated their Jewish identity, or even in cases that some pieces of evidence were in contradiction with a clear Jewish identity. In 1634, Margherita Arrigona, the landlady of Andrea Nunciata, alias Abram Teseo recognised him as a Jew because of his red hat, although she admitted that Nunciata had eaten the same food with her, namely everything the Christians were used to eat. Similarly, another witness Antonio testified that Nunciata had visited many times his home where they had eaten the same food, such as every sort of meat. Nevertheless, he regarded Nunciata as a Jew since the witness was seeing him associate with the Jews and wear the red hat.³⁴

Outside the restricted environment of parishes and neighbourhoods, the distinctive headgears played a major role in making religious identities easily recognisable in the busy areas of Venice, such as the marketplaces in Rialto and the Piazza S. Marco, where the multitude of people made it difficult for witnesses to observe carefully and constantly the others' conduct. In 1598, Domingo de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador to Venice, brought an accusation against the young Portuguese António Schiaves Rodriguez. Rodriguez had presented himself as a

fratelli, tutti però vestivano da Christiani col capel negro et per fama erano comunemente da tutti tenuti per Christiani et andavano vestiti alla curta"; on the case see, 15, 20, 26, 29, 35, 58, 83, 121.

³³ Ibid., 60: "Io vedo uno di essi doi fratelli con uno suo figliolo per la città col capello rosso in testa come portano li Hebrei et giudico che si siano fatti hebrei et stiano in ghetto con li Hebrei. [...] Sono almeno 3 anni in circa et ogni giorno si vedono a passar per l'anconetta, maraviglia di quelli che li conoscono et che li vedono"; 64: "et questo Georgio Franceschi l'ho veduto da 7 o 8 mesi in qua a passar vestito da hebreo, col capel rosso in testa. [...] Et in sua compagnia ho veduto doi suoi figlioli vestiti da Hebrei".

³⁴ Processi (1633 – 1637), 48: "So che è stato in casa mia un tal hebreo col capel rosso"; "Ha mangiato in casa mia più volte et mangiava di quello che mangiavo io, cioè come mangiano li Christiani"; 49: "È stato diverse volte in casa mia a mangiar anco et beber et mangiava di quello che mangiavo ancor

Christian at the ambassador's home asking for charity to go to Jerusalem. Some days later, the ambassador's son Jorge and the servant Diego de Palomares saw Rodriguez in Rialto wearing the Jewish red hat. Amazed at Rodriguez, De Palomares immediately informed his master: "Would you recognise the man that the day before yesterday was about to go to Jerusalem? Turn your head and you will see him with the red hat on!" Jorge reproached Rodriguez shouting: "You scoundrel! What does this mean? Have you become a Jew from Christian?"³⁵

The colour of the headgear appeared to be decisive even for Jews from the Ghetto, who were called to testify before the tribunal. Avoiding an unambiguous answer about whether the De Nis family were Christians or Jews, Ioan Valenzin hinted that they were not Jews since he had never seen them wearing the yellow hat that the Jews wore in Venice.³⁶ For the Jews that appeared as witnesses the yellow or red hat was also an important sign of someone's Jewish faith. In 1634, Isac Zacuto, a Jew from the Ghetto Vecchio, who had offered hospitality to Andrea Nunciata when the latter arrived to Venice from the Ottoman lands, said that he had always seen Nunciata in the Ghetto with the red hat; otherwise he would not have allowed him to stay at his home if he had not had the red hat. Also Zacuto testified that he had not asked Nunciata whether he was a Jew or Christian because seeing him with the red hat he took him for a Jew.³⁷

Also Jewish witnesses conceived the changing of the distinctive headgear as a change in someone's religious affiliation. Isac Zacuto reported that when he had been informed and complained to Andrea Nunciata about his baptism in Modena, Nunciata left the Ghetto for the house of Antonio Pevere in Dorsoduro, taking off the red hat and wearing the black headgear. The Jew Zacharias Callò testified that when

io et mangiava anco carne di salame d'ogni sorte come mangiavo anch'io"; "et mi lo tenevo per hebreo perché lo vedevo a pratticar con li Hebrei, portando anch'esso il capel rosso".

³⁵ Processi (1587 – 1598), 151 - 52: "Dopo quatro o cinque giorni fu incontratto per strada in Rialto presso San Giacomo da quelli di casa mia, mio figlio don Zorzi et il sudetto Diego, con la baretta rossa da hebreo et meravigliato mio figlio et il servitore di questa mutatione gli disse: 'Furfante! Che vuol dir questo? Di christiano ti sei fatto hebreo?'; 155: "Signor sì, pochi giorni doppo, essendo in compagnia del signor don Giorgio, fiol del signor ambasciator, lo viddi in Rialto con un capello rosso da hebreo et dissi al sudetto don Giorgio: 'Conoscerebbe vostra signoria l'homo, che l'altro hieri andava in Hierusalem? Volti la testa, che lo vederà con un capel rosso!'; on the case, 46, 123.

³⁶ Processi (1585 – 1589), 109: "Gli Hebrei in Venetia portano la beretta gialla ma questi Philippi non gli ho visto mai la beretta gialla".

³⁷ Processi (1633 – 1637), 50: "Et sempre l'ho veduto a pratticar in ghetto col capel rosso perchè altramente non li haverei dato la prattica della casa se non havesse havuto il capel rosso"; 51: "Non gli

he had met Nunciata in Ragusa some years ago, he wore a yellow stripe around his hat for some days, and the witness had recognised it as the Jewish sign, but later Nunciata put on the Christian black hat.³⁸

Apart from the headgear as a strong indication of religious identities, differences or changes in someone's general clothing style also came to signify religious adherence. Among much else, dress-code signified ethnic origin too. Christian travellers in the Ghetto, such as Thomas Coryate and Philip Skippon, observed that despite the different turbans, Levantine Jews' dress resembled that of the Turks.³⁹ In 1621, the parish priest Giacomo Croce noticed that one of the Diaz brothers, after his return to Venice, not only wore a red hat but also was dressed with a long, Levantine-style garment.⁴⁰

General clothing style appeared to be significant in the identification of Jewish women.⁴¹ While the Venetian authorities passed detailed legislation on the Jewish headgears, no such provision was taken for Jewish women, with the exception of the legislation in 1443 that required Jewish women to wear distinctive signs.⁴² Indeed, as it emerges from the few denunciations against women for lapsing from Christianity to Judaism, a change in any sort of headgear was never reported as a sign of deviance. This lack of dress-code requirements in subsequent decrees was presumably the result of the Jewish women's limited association with the Christian society.⁴³ The urban space outside the Ghettos was the setting for male activities. In

dimandai mai se fosse hebreo o christiano ma vedendolo in casa mia dove entrò col capel rosso, lo reputai hebreo".

³⁸ Ibid., 53: "mi rispose che era vero che lui era christiano et si ritirò subito in casa di Antonio Pevere, appresso l'Incurabili, per mezzo il burchio della Calzina et gettò via il capel rosso et prese il negro et disse che portava il capel rosso per haver il suo, né più l'ho veduto col capel rosso"; 64: "Lo viddi alquanti giorni col segno da hebreo, mi pare che fosse un ligazzo giallo atorno il capello et questo segno lo portò appresso poco 10, 15 o 20 giorni in circa, non mi ricordo così bene. Et dopo ripose il segno da hebreo lo viddi col segno da christiano, col capello negro".

³⁹ Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*, 132 – 45; B. Ravid, "Christian Travellers in the Ghetto of Venice: Some Preliminary Observations", in his *Studies on the Jews of Venice, 1382 – 1797* (Aldershot, 2003), 120, 130.

⁴⁰ Processi (1608 – 1632), 60: "Et questo suo figliolo è de 18 o 20 anni et va col capello rosso et ferrarolo ma il padre va vestito con una vesta longa alla levantina col capello rosso".

⁴¹ See the remarks on Jewish women's clothing and ear-rings, D. Owen Hughes, "Distinguishing Signs: Ear-Rings, Jews and Franciscan Rhetoric in the Italian Renaissance City", *Past and Present*, 112 (1986): 20 – 4, 40.

⁴² Ravid, "From Yellow to Red", 183; initially the legislation concerned men but soon, on the grounds of Christians having sexual relations with Jewish women, the Senate rectified the situation, Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros*, 87 – 8.

⁴³ Little is known about ordinary Jewish women of the Venetian Ghetto, apart from some well-known figures, H. Tzvi Adelman, "Jewish Women and Family Life, Inside and Outside the Ghetto", in Davis and Ravid, *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, 143 – 165.

this view, Jewish women differed from ordinary Christian women, who displaying considerable mobility even sought employment in the Ghetto.⁴⁴ The condition of Jewish women had a parallel to that of upper-class Christian women;⁴⁵ Jewish women's confinement was the result of gender preoccupations and their belonging to a minority group.

Nevertheless, despite the limited presence of Jewish women outside the Ghettos, Christians in Venice were aware that Jewish female clothing differed from that of Christian women. These differences provided evidence to Christian witnesses for identifying religious identity. Also the tribunal was mindful of the existence of difference in female clothing. Most examples on the perceptions of female clothing come from the trial against Gaspar Ribiera, the longest trial of alleged crypto-Judaism that came before the Inquisition after it was revealed that Ribiera, a Portuguese Christian of Marrano origin, had refused to pay the dowry he had promised to Alumbra, a Jewish woman, whom Ribiera's son João (Giovanni) had secretly married in 1575.⁴⁶ In 1580, Bartolomeo, servant of Gaspar Ribiera, was asked whether the first time he saw Alumbra, she was dressed as a Christian or Jewess. Bartolomeo replied that he did not know what kind of clothes she wore, either Christian or Jewish, but he was inclined to believe that she was dressed as a Jewess because she wore a white veil. Similarly, the housekeeper Mattea De Angelis, testified that she had seen Alumbra twice at the Ribieras' home and she had identified her as a Jewess, since "she wore a bonnet and a veil and all the other things that the Jewesses wore".⁴⁷ Elena Zogia, a Venetian *cittadina* and Gaspar Ribiera's second wife, described the first time she met Alumbra:

I did not know who was coming upstairs but hearing *zoccoli* shoes on the stairs, Mattea [the housemaid] and I open the door and I see a Jewish woman. I recognised [that she

⁴⁴ M. Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore and London, 2001), 103 – 20; Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 160 – 3.

⁴⁵ D. Romano, "Gender and the Urban Geography of Renaissance Venice", *Journal of Social History*, 23, 2 (1989): 339 – 53.

⁴⁶ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 230 – 40; on the case see below, 14, 38 – 9, 42 – 5, 49 – 51, 54, 55, 57, 103.

⁴⁷ Processi (1579 – 1586), 94: "Ei dictum se detta dona era iovine o vecchia, in che habito era vestita da christiana o da hebrea, respondit: La era de meza età et io non so in che habito fosse o christiano hebreo ma credo più presto da hebrea perché haveva un vello in testa, credo più presto bianco che altramente"; 100 – 1: "Signor sì, che la è venuta doi volte, in habito da hebrea et io non so el nome suo [...] et nel venir su per la schala la videssimo che era hebrea perché era vestita con una schuffia et velli et altre cose come vano le hebre".

was a Jewess] by her clothes and the black silk veil she wore on her head. As she walked up the stairs, she removed the veil and her hairstyle was that of a Jewess, as I saw from the door. [...] And I told her: “What a nice hairstyle, my dear!” She told me: “Well, I came like this so that the breeze on the boat does not make me ill”. And I told her: “My dear, this is a Jewess’s dress, it is in the Ghetto that [women] are dressed like this” She started laughing and did not respond me. [...] And I told her: “My dear, become a Christian and throw away that veil; you would look more beautiful!”⁴⁸

A Jewish woman’s wearing of *zoccoli* (high platform shoes), a fashion so widespread among Venetian noblewomen, that exhibited their social status and an attempt to feminize some public spaces,⁴⁹ suggests that some dress patterns crossed the Christian – Jewish boundaries. Coming from an impoverished but high social ranking Jewish family that was connected with João Miquez alias Yosef Nasi alias Giovanni Miches, Duke of Naxos, Alumbra,⁵⁰ followed some of the dress codes of her Christian counterparts. The relative liberty that Jewish women enjoyed on the part of the Venetian authorities regarding the requirement of distinguishing signs might have resulted in Jewish women’s gradual adoption of the dress code of their Christian neighbours in some areas of the Venetian state. In 1642, vigilant rabbis in Corfu warned that it was “an obligation for the daughters of Israel...to be careful in their clothes, so as not to transgress the prohibition against imitating the Gentiles.”⁵¹

Therefore, as the dress code constituted the most straightforward indication of someone’s religious identity, unawareness of the different dressing styles often resulted in limited understanding of religious diversity. This kind of unawareness Antonio admitted, who was the former gardener in the estate of the nobleman Giorgio Corner on the island of Murano, where it was supposed that the marriage between João Ribiera and the Jewess Alumbra took place in 1575. In 1580, asked

⁴⁸ Ibid., 113 – 14: “Et io non sapeva chi veniva suso et sentendo zocholi per la scalla alzo l’antiporta mi e Matthia et vedo che l’era una dona hebreia che la cognobbi alli vestimenti et alla testa che haveva un pezzo de ormesin negro su la testa. Et a pè de la schala se fece cavar questo ormesin de la testa er romase la testa aconza all’hebreia ch’io vedeva da questa antiporta [...] Et io gli dissi: ‘A fia, che bel concier de cao!’ Et lei me disse: ‘E, son venuta così perché l’aere de la barcha non me faci mal’. Et io gli dissi: ‘Fia, questo è habito da hebreia, ché in geto vano così’. Et lei comenzò a rider et non mi dete altra risposta. [...] Et io li diceva: ‘Cara fia, fative christiana, butate giù quel habito de la testa che parerete più bella!’”

⁴⁹ R. C. Davis, “The Geography of Gender in the Renaissance”, in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. J. C. Brown and R. C. Davis (London, 1998), 33 – 7.

⁵⁰ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 238.

⁵¹ Quoted in Kisch, “The Yellow Badge”, 94.

whether any Jewish woman with other persons had visited Corner's house, Antonio responded:

I do not remember having seen any Jews there, but of course, some gentlemen, some foreigners and women used to come and see the gardens and the house. Unless the Jews came in the guise of foreigners, I have not seen them. Besides, even if I had seen Jewish women I would not have understood whether they were Christians or Jewesses because I am not aware of the distinction of their clothes.⁵²

Finally, some witnesses recognised that the classification between Christians and Jews on the basis of distinguishing headgears and dress-code was not relevant outside the Catholic cities of Italy. In 1635, recollecting his memories, Zacharias Callò amended his earlier testimony and said that when he had met Andrea Nunciata in the Levant he recognised him as a Jew because he stayed at the home of his Jewish father and not judging from his clothes, since in the Levant there was no difference in the dress of Jews and Christians, because everyone was able to dress as they liked, provided that they did not wear clothes of green or white colour that were designated exclusively for the Muslims.⁵³

Scrutinising Suspect Households and Individuals

Official definitions of religious Otherness provided only a small part of the criteria that witnesses employed to track down alleged crypto – Jews. Testifying before the Inquisition, witnesses mainly drew on “unofficial” criteria of orthodoxy and deviance that were associated with norms of behaviour and customs acceptable by the community. In this view, the social contacts of the suspicious persons constituted signs that might have indicated their guilt. Testifying in the case of Jorge Francisco

⁵² Processi (1579 – 1586), 133: “Io non mi ricordo de haverci visti Hebrei ma ci venivano ben dei zentilhomeni, dei forestieri et de le donne a veder el zardino et così anche per le stancie et, se non son venuti li Hebrei in forma de forestieri, io non li ho visti... Et se anchora vedesse done hebree non cognosserei se fossero christiane o hebree perché non ho questa cognition de le distinction de li habiti”.

⁵³ Processi (1633 – 1637), 65: “Subdens declarans se: In Levante non vi è differenza di vestito tra li Hebrei et Christiani potendo vestirsi ognuno come vuole purché non vesta da turcho né color verde né turbante bianco né turbante verde. Et perché il padre di Abram era hebreo, penso che, stando in casa sua, vivesse da hebreo”; on external appearance as sign of crypto-Muslim practices, 154 – 58.

Diaz, Giovanni Battista Gemma recalled that he regarded as a sign of Diaz' Christian identity that he employed Christian servants.⁵⁴

In 1642, Francesco Gritti, a Venetian patrician's son, appeared in the Holy Office of Bergamo and denounced the widow Violante Ramira for observing Jewish rites. Gritti had noticed that Jewish women visited regularly Ramira and, as her son had informed Gritti, the women spent a lot of time locked in a room. Baldassarre Bernardo, the parish priest of S. Marcuola, Ramira's previous parish, was aware that Ramira had contacts with Jews at her home, but he did not find it suspicious because he recalled that Violante had confessed and received communion. Maria, who worked at Ramira's home, testified that some Jews called the Boafi, visited Ramira's husband for business and some Jewish women visited Ramira, with whom Ramira said she had been friends since they were young. Finally, Angelo Gambara, the parish priest of S. Leonardo, where Ramira moved from S. Marcuola, reported that a Jew visited Ramira for business.⁵⁵

A similar pattern in witnesses' criteria can be found in the testimonies for the case of the De Nis family, from the S. Leonardo parish, one of the few full-dress trials against crypto – Jews that came before the tribunal in 1585. Although they paid attention to any suspicious contacts of the family, for some witnesses association with Jews was not always a sign of anxiety. Although she regarded most aspects of the De Nis family's way of living suspicious, the witness Cecilia could justify the frequent presence of Jews at their home on the grounds that the family were merchants. Similarly, another witness, Domenica took it for granted that since the De Nis were merchants both Jewish and Christian merchants could visit their house. However, other more acute, and maybe more experienced observers, thought that they were able to distinguish a suspicious visit from one for professional reasons.

⁵⁴ Processi (1608 – 1632), 64: "...in casa tenevano servitù de Christiani che havevano massare cristiane".

⁵⁵ Processi (1642 – 1681), 32: "Una certa donna vedova, che habita in Venetia di presente e sta a San Marcola ... et io ben mi ricordo il nome di questa donna è Violante Ramiri ... questa donna pare serva i riti hebraici ... Et ho veduto io stesso in diversi tempi a praticar in casa sua donne hebee, havendomi detto il sopradetto suo figliuolo Lorenzo che queste hebee si serravano con la sudetta Violante in camera le hore intiere"; 34: "Per quanto ho sentito a dire, tien pratica in casa sua de Hebrei,... anzi li vedevo a praticare vivendo anco suo marito, che si chiamava Antonio Ramiro [...] Mentre è stata nella mia parrochia si è confessata e comunicata"; 35: "Gli andavano Hebrei in casa chiamati i Boaffi, che erano 3 o 4 fratelli et facevano mercantia con il signor Antonio, suo marito... Non ho veduto altri Hebrei ma donne ancora hebee, che dicevano essere amiche dalla fanciullenza";

Giovanni Battista Guato, the priest of the neighbouring S. Geremia parish, reported that on working days both Christians and Jews frequented the house of the De Nis family. But on Saturday only Jews visited the family and especially Jewish women who visited the female members of the De Nis.⁵⁶

Regularly, and despite the limited access to the family life or the everyday customs of the suspect persons, witnesses provided evidence after inspecting the dietary customs of alleged crypto – Jews. It was often the servants that the suspicious persons employed, who acted as the intermediaries between the household and the community by spreading gossip on their masters' dubious dietary practices.⁵⁷ In 1674, Giovanni Battista Rainis, one of the accusers in the hearing about the family of Tomàs Butierz and Pedro Garzia, testified that the commonly held suspicion about the family intensified by information that their servants spread around the neighbourhood revealing that Garzia, Butierz and other family members consumed meat on Friday, Saturday and fast days. One of the servants, Domenica had confirmed those events to the delator himself.⁵⁸ In 1585, Cecilia reported that she had met the De Nis' former servant from Udine and having asked him why he had left his job he replied: "I do not want to go back and stay with those Marranos any more, because they eat meat on Friday and Saturday".⁵⁹

Some witnesses focused their attention on the food supplies that the suspects brought to their house. The witness Domenica noticed that the De Nis family brought live chickens home, and that they used to bring many chickens on Fridays.⁶⁰ Other witnesses used to ask suspicious persons about their dietary customs and expected to

38: "Capita in casa di detta Violante Ramiro un tal hebreo della mia età, di cui non so il nome et vi capita con occasione di robba che lei pretende da detto hebreo".

⁵⁶ Processi (1585 – 1589), 81: "Questi Philippi [ie the De Nis] hano de le mercantie et per questo ci vano in casa di Christiani et de li Hebrei"; 84: "Quasi ogni dì ghe vedo andar in casa de li Hebrei de la baretta di questi Philippi et anche di Christiani perché i sono marcadanti"; 84 - 5: "Et ho advertito anco che nella casa di questi ch'io li ho per mercanti, li altri giorni de la settimana ci praticano Christiani et Hebrei ma il sabbato non ci praticano Christiani ma solamente Hebrei, massimamente donne che vano a visitare le donne de la casa"; on the case see, 16, 20, 26, 27, 52 – 3, 54 – 56, 58, 59, 103 – 18, 119.

⁵⁷ On gossip, 47 – 55.

⁵⁸ Processi (1642 – 1681), 178: "Ma ben presto s'accrebbe con più grave fondamento il comun sospetto dai discorsi delle serve di costoro, le quali divulgavano per tutta la vicinanza che mangiavano carne il venerdì, il sabbato e tutte l'altre vigilie e Tempori, ciò in particolare fu affermato a me da una de dette serve chiamata Domenica"; on the case see, 18, 19, 21, 24 – 5, 58.

⁵⁹ Processi (1585 – 1589), 81: "Sono da 5 mesi che essendosi partito da li ditti Philippi un servitor, credo da Udene, lo incontrai per strada et li dissi perché non tornava a star con li detti, lui, el nome del qual non mi ricordo, me disse: 'Io non voglio tornar a star con Marani, perché magnano la carne de venere et de sabbato'".

extract information from their replies. In 1579, the Portuguese António Saldagna alias fra Emanuel alias Luís de Azevedo told the Inquisition that having asked Michele Vaz, Giorgio Lopes and Diogo Vaz about their Saturday lunch, Diogo told him that he had eaten a pasticcio. To his surprise, Saldagna asked whether it contained meat but Diogo avoided answering and laughed.⁶¹

Believing that it would be easier to extract information on any deviation from the Christian dietary laws, witnesses approached and examined the younger members of the suspect families. It was in the trial of 1555 against Elena de Freschi Olivi, a former Jewess, who was accused of uttering blasphemies during Mass at the church of S. Marcilian, that the witness Margarita, a former neighbour of the accused, based her testimony on information supplied to her by Elena's granddaughters. Margarita, the wife of one of the Doge's officers, had been employed by Elena's son, the physician Giovanni Battista de Freschi Olivi, the former Jew Lazarus, as instructor for his daughters.⁶² Margarita testified that the girls had told her about all things that happened at home and specifically, that on Fridays or Saturdays their grandmother ate meat or broth that had remained from Thursday supper. On Saturday evening Elena prepared and ate some chops from the meat that her son had bought for Sunday. Also Elena massacred hens by cutting their throat "as the Jews do." Margarita had warned Giovanni Battista about those events and he had rebuked the girls for telling Margarita all that happened at home. Sometimes on Friday or Saturday, Giovanni Battista's younger girls went upstairs and told Margarita: "Miss, grandmother ate meat and also gave some to us"⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid., 83: "et quando portano polli a casa sempre li portano vivi et il venere portano polli assai".

⁶¹ Processi (1571 – 1580), 135: "et, interrogandoli io che cosa havevano merendato la matina, Diego mi diceva che si è mangiato un pasticcio. Et interrogandolo io: 'Di carne?' egli né confessando né negando, dicea ridendo: 'Ha ha ha'".

⁶² Giovanni Battista de Freschi Olivi had an active role in the burning of Talmud in 1553: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 245, 282 – 83.

⁶³ Processi (1548 – 1560), 157: "Mi vederò, le pute grande, cioè le due mazor, cioè Gratia e Orseta, me dicevano ogni cosa de quello la faceva in casa et tra le altre cose me disseno che se el zuoba restava carne over brodo in casa che la vechia el magnava el venere et el sabbado et che quando misser Zuan Battista comprava la carne al sabbado per la domenega lei se faceva dele brezuole el sabbado de sera et le manzava et io l'ho ditto a meser Zuan Battista che 'l dovesse provederge et lui deva delle botte alle pute et le reprendeva perché le me dicevano ogni cosa. Et anche le pute me disseno che quando i amazzeno galine in casa la vechia le schanava come fanno li Hebrei. [...] Le due pute pizzole venivano de suso da mi et mi dicevano alle volte 'Madona mistra, la nona', parlando della madre de meser Zuan Battista, 'à manzando della carne et ancho ne ha dato a nui' et io, perché era venere o sabbado, cridava alle pute"; on the case see, 19, 22 – 3.

More than a century later, the same pattern appeared in the testimonies of Girolamo Bona, who in 1674 reported that his sisters had once asked Tomàs Butierz' young sister Agnese, what sort of food they had cooked, and the girl had replied "a nice vegetable soup with ham." That event had taken place on an Apostle's day. On another occasion, Vittoria Anna, Butierz' youngest sister informed Bona's sisters that on the last day of the Carnival she had discovered a pot with meat in a cupboard. The girl had asked her mother and she said that the meat was for that night. But the girl, as Bona testified, asked that since they were to go out that night, the meat would be eaten at Lent.⁶⁴

In their turn, Jewish witnesses recognised the importance of dietary customs. Some of them stressed the dietary code's double function. Diet signified adherence to Judaism and simultaneously detachment from Christianity and vice versa. In 1636, the Jew Liberalis or Liberman, an innkeeper in the Ghetto, who was called to testify in the case of the Jewish convert Francesco Maria Leoncini, alias Moses Israel, was aware of both Jewish and Christian dietary customs and their significance.⁶⁵ He did not fail to stress Jewish customs in connection with the Christian fast days, an aspect that for both religions was of particular importance. He reported that the time he had offered hospitality to Leoncini, the latter "ate all sort of foods, and on Friday and Saturday he ate meat in the presence of other Jews". From the same trial, the Jew Moises Benvenista from Patras made similar remarks; Leoncini "ate meat and all the other foods that the Jews customarily eat on Friday and Saturday".⁶⁶

Either because of lack of evidence or unawareness of non-Christian dietary laws, most Christian witnesses offered evidence that mainly indicated detachment

⁶⁴ Processi (1642 – 1681), 191 - 92: "Ho udito anco, per quanto hora mi è sovenuto, da persone di casa mia che, essendo capitata nella nostra casa Agnese, figliola maggiore, le fu dimandato per accidente o dalla madre di mio cognato o da una delle mie sorelle qual minestra havesse preparato per il desinare, ella rispondesse: 'Una buona minestra de capucci col presciuto', e questo fu in vigilia commandato e se non fallo d'un apostolo"; "Quanto al mangiar carne ho sentito da miei di casa che detta Vittoria Anna mi disse, per quanto mi pare, che l'ultimo giorno di Carnevale prossimo passato haveva ritrovata una pignatta di carne in un armario e che, chiedendo a sua madre quando haveva da mangiarsi, essa rispose: 'Questa sera', nella qual sera parmi certo ch'essa andasse a cena da suo fratello Garzia, dal che cioè perché andavano a cena fuori di casa et così argomentò essa putta che dovessero mangiar la carne la Quadragesima".

⁶⁵ On Leoncini as an emblematic figure among Jewish converts in the prospect of a better life: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 301 – 2.

⁶⁶ Processi (1633 – 1637), 137: "Signori sì, ha mangiato in quei tempi in casa mia ogni sorte di cibi et di venerdì et sabbato mangiava carne alla presentia di quei Hebrei forestieri et di mia moglie Gantina et anco alla mia presentia"; 139: "Alle volte mangiavamo insieme diverse volte, anco di venerdì et sabbati, carne et altri cibi come mangiano li Hebrei".

from the Christian practices. However, occasionally, some witnesses showed awareness of alleged Jewish customs, and subsequently they reported pieces of evidence that they perceived as adhering to Judaism. Most testimonies came from Spanish and Portuguese witnesses who appear to have been more alert to crypto-Jewish practices. António Saldagna, who gave one of the most complete reports of crypto-Judaism in Venice, testified that sometimes when he had gone fishing with Diogo Vaz, the latter had avoided eating foods prepared by Christians, preferring just some salad and bread.⁶⁷ The Spanish Diego Ortis de Vera described Abraam Righetto as a Christian since he ate pork meat and other foods prohibited to Jews.⁶⁸ But also Venetian witnesses recognised particular practices as Jewish. In 1571, Giovanni Antonio Vicinio, who had been in the same prison with Abraam Righetto said: “[Righetto] lives as a Jew”; and he explained: “He eats meat every day and observes the feast of Saturday”.⁶⁹ In 1555, Margarita, the instructor of Giovanni Battista de Freschi Olivi’s daughters, reported that his accused mother, Elena, maintained the Jewish law of slaughtering birds by cutting their throat. Showing familiarity with Jewish customs, the priest Girolamo Bona testified in 1674, that one day Leonora and Agnese, Tomàs Butierz’ mother and sister, had visited his home. Bona’s sisters offered the two women a bunch of grapes but they refused obstinately to eat it by claiming that they suffered from headache. Bona recognised that they refused the grapes because they observed the custom that he called the “Great Fast”, probably referring to the anniversary of Kippur.⁷⁰

Some witnesses, mainly neighbours, jealously sought to scrutinise the private life of suspected persons and spot customs that indicated adherence to Judaism. In

⁶⁷ Processi (1571 - 1580), 134: “et andando alcune volte a pescar in compagnia di detto Diego, egli non voleva mangiar cosa alcuna del cucinato in casa di Christiani, mangiava solamente insalata e pane”.

⁶⁸ Processi (1570 - 1572), 43: “et lui viveva alla christiana, cioè mangiava porco et altri cibi prohibiti a Giudei”.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 51: “Interrogatus se’l detto fa vita christiana o se’l vive all’hebreu, respondit: Alla hebreu. Interrogatus de causa scientie, respondit: Il magna carne ogni giorno et fa la festa del Sabbatho et però el vive alla hebreu”.

⁷⁰ Processi (1642 – 1681), 192 – 193: “Et da mie sorelle ho inteso che li sudetti Tomaso, madre e mie sorelle et cetera habbino digiunato il Digiun detto il grande e che ciò habbino osservato prima dal sentirli occupati e vederli affaccendati incessamente tutto il giorno senza desinare nel tempo di detto digiuno, qual è in staggione che vi è l’uva perché, essendo venuta una nostra donna di fuori, ella ci portò dell’uva e trovandosi in quel punto nella sala della nostra habitatione la signora Leonora e Agnese, mie sorelle habbino a bella posta dato un graspo di uva nelle mani ad esse acciò la mangiassero ma loro in niun modo, benché pregate, ne mangiorno con dirli che li doleva il capo”; see also witnesses’ testimonies on Muslim dietary customs, 153, 160 – 62, 199.

early modern urban centres, the neighbourhood was “an autonomous environment with rules and laws of its own, a place where everyone was watched by everyone else”. In Venice’s neighbourhoods, family life was highly visible and audible; to a large extent, the private had to be a public affair.⁷¹

Giovanni Battista Guato, the parish priest of S. Geremia, a neighbour area to S. Leonardo, where the De Nis family lived, noticed some special customs that took place at the family’s home. He reported that he had observed the activities of the De Nis on Friday and Saturday and he had found out that on Friday night the De Nis often lighted candlesticks with slots for seven or eight candles. Then they closed the windows and the curtains but because there was no blind he was able to see that the candles burnt until the morning. On Saturday, during the day he was not able to see the candles because of the daylight but in the evening he had noticed that the candles still burnt. Guato added that he had never seen those candles during the other days of the week apart from the Friday night until the Saturday night.⁷²

The priest Giacomo Croce had systematically observed that as long as the Diaz stayed at S. Marcuola, every Saturday many Jews gathered at their home. Croce reported another event that made him suspicious: “also I noted that the women of the Diaz family observed the Saturday feast because I saw them stand on their balcony on that day.”⁷³ Another witness, Lucrezia, offered additional evidence on the observance of Saturday. She testified that the Diaz used to celebrate on Saturday and on Sunday the girls of Jorge Diaz used to colour their hair blond; a habit that in all probability, Christian women did not do on Sundays.⁷⁴ This sign of deviance from common custom is perhaps reflected in T. Coryate’s observation that “All the women of Venice every Saturday in the afternoone do use to annoint their haire with oyle, or

⁷¹ A. Farge, “The Honor and Secrecy of Families”, in *A History of Private Life*, ed. R. Chartier, 3 vols. (Massachusetts and London, 1989), 3: 578; J. Ferraro, “The Power to Decide. Battered Wives in Early Modern Venice”, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 48 (1995): 504.

⁷² Processi (1585 – 1589), 84: “Io ho advertito più volte che’l venire da sera come è verso le 23 hore in circa acendere alcune lume che hano 7 o 8 boche et fano 7 o 8 lumi et inmediate serano le finestre ma, con tuto che serano li veri, perché non ci sono schuri li lumi si veggono fino alla matina e il giorno non si può così vedere ma el sabbado da sera si vede che ardeno ancor essi lumi. Et questi lumi non gli ho visti nelli altri giorni de la settimana ma solamente el venire a sera per fino al sabbato da sera”.

⁷³ Processi (1608 – 1632), 60: “Mentre stavano nella nostra parochia di San Marcola, io osservava che ogni sabbato andava gran quantità de Hebrei a casa loro et anco osservai che le loro donne osservavano il sabbato favendo festa, perché le vedevo in detto giorno a star sopra il balcone”.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 66: “Alcune vicine dicevano che erano Marani et so che il sabbato facevano festa et la dominicha si biondizavano, massime le pute di quel di sopra”.

some other drugs, to the end to make it looke faire, that is whitish...then they sit in some sun-shining place in the chamber...”⁷⁵

A more complete picture of crypto-Jews' observance of Saturday came in 1674, by the friar Girolamo Bona. Bona took advantage of being a close neighbour of Tomàs Butierz and scrutinized most of their activities. He testified that he had noticed that Leonora, Butierz' mother, observed the Sabbath. He offered a variety of signs on which he supported his suspicion. He had observed that on Saturday Leonora was smartly dressed and she did not do the tasks that she used to do on other days, such as sewing and housekeeping. On the contrary, on Christian feasts she used to sieve or sweep the house, tasks that she avoided doing on Saturday. Bona testified that he believed that Leonora observed the celebration of Saturday faithfully because on one occasion she pushed her daughter Agnese, who was ill, to rise from bed in order to light fire, because the mother did not want to do it on Saturday. Moreover, Girolamo Bona added that a lamp that was burning from Friday night until Saturday night indicated the celebration of the Sabbath. Even more suspiciously the lamp was not burning in front of an image, as it used to before an image of the Virgin was given for donation. Bona testified that he had amended the situation by hanging new images of the Virgin and saints.⁷⁶

Occasionally, in the eyes of Christian witnesses, blasphemies against the Church, the sacraments, Christ and the Virgin or the basic Christian teachings appear to have been a trace of Judaism. Nevertheless, taking into account that crypto-Jews might have avoided engaging in conversations and generally they showed reservation in their contacts with Christians, discussions on religious issues and heretical opinions maintained by alleged crypto-Jews were rarely reported before the Holy

⁷⁵ Coryate, *Crudities*, 262.

⁷⁶ Processi (1642 – 1681), 192: “Quanto al santificar il sabbato e lavorar le feste comandate da santa Chiesa ho veduto per qualche tempo continuamente osservarsi il sabbato e particolarmente dalla madre, vedendola vestita da festa, meglio dagl'altri giorni, senza far alcuna opera servile consueta da lei farsi in altri giorni, come di cucire e far altre facende domestiche di casa. Et per il contrario ne giorni festivi di santa Chiesa faceva diverse operationi che non faceva il sabbato, come tamisare, spazzar la casa e simili [...] ch'essendo ammalata Agnese, la sua madre le faceva impulso a levarsi per accender il fuoco, il che lei non voleva fare, cioè la madre, perché era giorno di sabbato. E questo così si argomentò perché li altri giorni essa madre accendeva il foco et in quello giorno di sabbato voleva che essa sua figlia ammalata si levasse ad accenderlo [...] “Quanto all'accender la lampada la sera del venerdì e tenerla accesa sino alla sera del seguente sabbato, questo è vero, perché l'ho veduto io spessissime volte et di più vedendo io che questa lampada ardeva non inanzi ad alcuna immagine, com'era solito di prima che vi stava un'immagine nostra della Madonna, che dopo fu donata per carità

Office. Again in the case of blasphemies and anti-Christian views, it is not clear how much witnesses recognised that those attitudes sprang from a genuine attachment to Judaism. Apparently, the Portuguese António Saldagna, fully aware of Jewish tenets and crypto-Jewish practices, connected Diogo Vaz's anti-Christian comments with Judaism when he reported that Vaz discussed passages from the Scriptures at Saldagna's home and questioned the virginity of the Madonna and the coming of Christ, "as the Jews actually do".⁷⁷ But the same cannot be said with certainty about Giovanni Antonio Vicinio, who had been in the same prison with Abraam Righetto, and testified that the latter had called Christ a false prophet.⁷⁸

On other occasions of reports on alleged blasphemies and anti-Christian views connected to crypto-Judaism, the witnesses' knowledge of the suspicious persons' Jewish past should have played a major role. In 1555, the parish priest of S. Marcilian reported to the Inquisition information passed to him by some women who attended the Sunday Mass and had heard Elena de Freschi Olivi utter blasphemies, "You lie in your teeth, you're a bastard, son of a harlot", when the priest said the Credo.⁷⁹ Later before the tribunal those women hinted at the notion that the old woman was an unrepentant Jewess, although they never testified it openly. It seems that suspicions about Elena and maybe the De Freschi Olivi family already existed. The witness Lucrezia Bernardini testified that another witness, also involved in the trial, Paola Marcello, had told her that Elena went to the Ghetto sometimes and had expressed her dislike for the Catholic faith.⁸⁰ In her turn, Paula Marcello also testified that once talking with the Jew Salomone, he had informed her that Elena Olivi "goes to the banks [in the Ghetto] to weep, and she would like emerge from this accursed

fuori di casa, mi mossi a rimettermi un altro quadro di Madonna et altri santi et attualmente ve lo posi dove pur ora si trova".

⁷⁷ Processi (1571 – 1580), 134: "detto Diego argumentò in casa mia delli passi della Scrittura come giusto fano gli Hebrei negandoni il passo d'Esaia "Esse virgo concipiet", che non s'intendeva della Vergine gloriosa né quello passo "Puer datus est nobis" s'intenderà di Christo né quello di Daniello delle ebdomade né nel Genesi dove dice "Non auferetur sceptrum de Juda" e molti altri passi che non mi ricordo, cittandomi i testi hebrei".

⁷⁸ Processi (1570 – 1572), 51: "Ragionando io con lui de la fede, lui mi ha detto che Christo benedetto è stato un falso profeta"; on Righetto see, 19, 27 – 8, 62 – 3, 89 – 102, 119.

⁷⁹ Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 285; Processi (1548 – 1560), 152, "dicendo el prete el Credo « Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine et homo factus est », disse queste over simel parole Ti menti per la gola, ti è bastado nassiuoto de una meretrice"; on the case see, 17, 19.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 154, "et più vi dico che anchora alla messa granda, cantando li preti essa messa granda, la diceva da sua posta 'Guarda 'ste bestie et questi bastardazzi che cosa che i dice' "; "Et dixit ex se: Ragionando con madona Paula Marcello me ha ditto, ragionando de questa donna, che la va in getto alle volte et esclama che questa fede non è buona".

faith and return to her own”.⁸¹ Paola Marcello reported that Salomone, a German Jew, who taught music, referring to Elena Olivi had told her: “Madam, someone who is not a good Jew is not a good Christian, and those who have become Christians would like to become Jews”.⁸²

Imaginary or real, the witnesses’ testimonies (for instance, the Jew Salomone did not confirm his dialogue with Marcello, although he appeared particularly hostile to the De Freschi Olivi) revealed that suspicion hovered over the family of neophytes. Their position among the other parishioners was far from secure. Evidently, their Jewish past was still alive among the other parishioners of S. Marcilian and S. Fosca. Their accusers constantly referred to Giovanni Battista de Freschi Olivi as the “Jewish doctor who became a Christian” [*ditto medego zudio fato chrestian*]. Also it would be plausible to suggest that a sort of antagonism towards the newcomer neophyte existed on behalf of the accusers who all came from upper-class families or families of some social standing in the parish. Paola Marcello and Laura Arimondo were noblewomen;⁸³ Lucrezia Grappina was a surgeon’s wife and Margarita the wife of a servant in the Ducal household [*uxor ser Hieronimi familiaris serenissimi principis*]. On the other hand, Giovanni Battista de Freschi Olivi was not of those who appeared to have converted out of economic necessity, but surely after his conversion he showed some ambition by obtaining a doctorate in theology from the University of Padua and collaborating with the authorities in condemning Hebrew books.⁸⁴ Without having been the direct cause, the uneasiness that the presence of the De Freschi Olivi family created in certain circles in the S. Marcilian and neighbouring parishes, might have resulted in revealing to the Inquisition the old woman’s inappropriate conduct.

Similarly, in 1578 the broker Antonio Moretti clearly capitalised on his knowledge of the accused person’s Jewish past, when accusing Duarte Dies [Dyes], formerly the Jew Isaac Salvarico, of preventing his wife from going to confession and communion, and himself uttering blasphemies against the Church and Christ by

⁸¹ Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 286.

⁸² Processi (1548 – 1560), 155: “El capita qui delli Hebrei et specialmente Salamon che insegna a sonar, el qual è todesco ... lui mi disse ‘Madonna, chi non è buon zudio non è buon christiano et quelli che son fatti christiani se vorrebbono far zudei’ et me nominò la madre del ditto meser Zuan Battista medico”.

⁸³ Processi (1548 – 1560), 154, n. 2, 3.

⁸⁴ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 282.

calling the clergy “bastards” and denying that Christ was the Messiah. Opening his denunciation, Moretti did not lose the opportunity to inform that Dies was a former Jew, who had received baptism in Venice nineteen years ago.⁸⁵ Finally, the Inquisition dropped the proceedings against Dies, after he convinced the tribunal that the accusations were motivated by the accuser’s ambition towards Dies’ property and illicit relations with Susanna van der Blum, Dies’ wife.⁸⁶ However, Moretti’s accusation is indicative of the vulnerability of former Jews and the way accusers may weave their stories to produce the image of crypto-Jews.

Anti-Christian views or scepticism towards the Christian teachings were offered as evidence for crypto – Judaism almost a century later in the case against Tomàs Butierz. In 1674, Giovanni Battista Rainis reported to the Inquisition that having discussed with Tomàs Butierz the feast of Epiphany, Butierz had said that he believed that the story of the star that guided the Magi was merely a fable. The priest Girolamo Bona also engaged in a conversation with Tomàs Butierz that aroused suspicion. Bona and Butierz lived in the same block of flats. Bona had some relations with the family of Butierz, as he visited their home and taught some Latin to Agnese, Tomàs’ young sister. On such an occasion, the priest Bona instructed the young girl on a text that dealt with the adoration of the Magi. Bona and Butierz started discussing that Christian teaching and the latter laughing wondered how it was possible that the three Magi humbled themselves to a newborn baby. Although Bona explained the miracle that had taken place, Butierz scornfully continued to express doubt by saying that the Magi were only three wizards. Bono reported that he was scandalised because having attempted at explaining that the word “Mago” meant wise man and not wizard, Butierz pretended to agree laughing and mocking.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Processi (1571 – 1580), 89 - 90: “Questo [Duarte Dies] proibisse alla sua consorta, nominata madona Susana de Valnonbrun, abita in Canaregio in casa del dottor soperchio, il confessarsi et comunicarsi, biastema Dio et niega Cristo esser el Messia, dise che l’è bastardo et che li preti et frati sono bastardi”.

⁸⁶ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 106 – 8.

⁸⁷ Processi (1642 – 1681), 182: “Mi soviene in specie che una volta scorrendo io con il già detto Tomaso già circa 2 in 3 mesi su la fundamenta in faccia ca’ Fonseca, essendo noi doi soli, della solennità dell’Epifania, mi disse che quell’apparition della stella con la mossa de maggi all’adoratione la teneva per una favola et altre cose simili che non mi soviene”; 185 – 86: “Un giorno scorrendo io dell’adoration de maggi, una persona presente [i.e. Tommaso Butierz] si mise a rider, dicendo com’era possibile che tre re s’humiliassero ad un bambino nascente. Io spiegato dopo il miracolo udii questo: Il negotio è ch’erano tre stregoni, io poi fattoli veder l’errore, perché quel nome di mago vuol dir sapiente e non streggone, ridendo e beffando detta persona annul e da questo conosciuto certo sprezzo di parlare, restai scandalizzato e questo è quanto mi occorre di dire”.

However, Butierz' alleged mockery was just one among other pieces of evidence that the accusers reported to the Inquisition as signs of crypto – Judaism.

Perhaps the unique case, in which anti-Christian views were perceived as a sign of Jewish inclination, without additional evidence being included in the accusation, took place in 1641. Emmanuel Fernandes from the S. Marcuola parish, in a discussion at a greengrocer's shop in Cannaregio, reportedly "asked among other things who had redeemed or remedied Adam's sin".⁸⁸ Although Fernandes was told by Michael Frizzi, a silk-weaver, who later brought the accusation against him, that "it was Jesus Christ Our Lord", Fernandes continued by saying, "nothing is true; I'll get you to see that it was Moses that remedied Adam's sin". However, among the witnesses only the greengrocer Iseppo Mazzochi hinted at Fernandes's alleged Jewish association: "I do not know whether this black man [Fernandes] is a Christian or Jew, but he professes to be a Christian". Fernandes, a former slave from Goa, was regularly associated with Jews, as he worked as a porter in the Ghetto. He told the Inquisition that he had some conversations with Jews on the Messiah:

Finding myself one day I believe at Malvasia [possibly an inn], I think in the S. Fosca area with some Jews that I know by sight. They discussed that the Messiah has not come. As I heard it, I asked them: where have your holy Fathers been, if the Messiah has not come? They replied that they have been in Paradise and then I added: so you have to admit that the Messiah has come, because only the Messiah could redeem them and open the gates to Paradise.⁸⁹

While blasphemies against the Church or negation of Christian tenets might have constituted signs of crypto-Judaism, lack of fervour in defending the superiority of Christianity or lack of demonstrative Christian behaviour could serve as a basis of suspicion too. In his testimony, the Spanish Gottardo Archari said that Duarte Gomez

⁸⁸ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. "Emmanuele Fernandes", den. Michael Frizzi, 26 February 1641: "e lui prese a dimandarmi tra le altre cose, chi haveva redento, o rimediato al peccato di Adamo"; test. Iseppo Mazzocchi, 11 April 1641: "Io non so se detto moro sia cristiano o hebreo, fa però professione di esser Cristiano"; test. Fernandes, 2 May 1641: "trovandomi un giorno credo alla Malvasia, mi pare a santa Fosca, con alcuni hebrei che non conosco di nome, ma solo di vista, venero dire tra di loro che non era venuto il messia. Et il sentendo questo, li presi a dimandare si non è venuto il Messia, dove sono li vostri sancti Padri: E perche mi risposero che erano in Paradiso soggiunsi, Adunque bisogna dire che sia venuto il messia, perche il messia è quello che haveva da redimerli et apriarli la porta del Paradiso".

⁸⁹ Ibid.: "et io gli risposi, che era stato Nostro Signor Giesu Cristo et egli soggiunse con dirmi: non è vero niente; che ti farò veder che è stato Mosè che ha rimediato al peccato di Adamo"; see also, 123.

and Agostinho Enrichez lived as Christians externally. He had seen them in churches and when they ate together they did not follow any special Jewish dietary customs. However, sometimes in religious discussions on the ceremonies and customs of Christians, Muslims and Jews, while Archari insisted on the superiority of those of the Christians, Gomez and Enrichez remained silent.⁹⁰

Christian Piety in Public and Crypto-Judaism

In 1585, Antonio Bertolini, the parish priest of S. Leonardo, brought charges against the De Nis family from his parish. He told the Inquisition: "In my parish live the Philippi [ie De Nis]...they have lived there for two years or less, enough for them to have been there for two Easters, and I have never seen them in church". Later he added: "A parish priest from Cannaregio, Battista Guato called me before the last Easter and warned me: "What kind of persons are those who live there in that house [of your parish] that they never kneel when the Ave Maria is rung?"⁹¹

In 1621, Giacomo Croce, the priest of SS. Ermagora e Fortunato church (S. Marcuola), testified that he had sometimes seen Jorge Diaz and his brother, Fernando, in church but not during Holy Week. He also said that he had confessed the wife and the daughter of one of the brothers. Giacomo Croce reported that having been to the Diaz' home, on the occasion of the death of a young boy, he had observed an image of the Magi and some others with Old Testament scenes in the main room of the house.⁹²

For witnesses, the observance of Christian customs, such as attendance of Mass, confession and communion was the most easily detectable signs of orthodoxy. Although before the Council of Trent religious societies, such as the companies of

⁹⁰ Processi (1548 – 1560), 228.

⁹¹ Processi (1585 – 1589), 79: "In nella mia parochia habitano li Philippi...quali hano habitado nella mia parochia per el spacio de doi anni o mancho, basta che ci sono stati doi Pasque et io non li ho veduti mai in chiesa"; 80: "Et il piovane de Canaregio meser pre'Battista Guiato inanzi Pasqua proxime passata me mandò a chiamare per avisarme de queste cose et disse: "Che persone son queste che stano in questa casa vostra qua per mezo che mai quando sona l'Ave Maria s'inzenochiano?"

⁹² Processi (1608 – 1632), 59 – 60: "...et mentre hanno habitato in detta nostra contrada li ho veduti detti fratelli qualche volte alla messa ma per la settimana santa non li ho veduti in chiesa. [...] Ma so di haver confessato la moglie et una figliola di uno di questi"; 60: "Andai una volta, con occasione di un putino morto, in casa loro et visi nel loro portego un quadro delli tre magi et li altri erano del Testamento Vecchio".

Divine Love promoted, among much else, regular confession and communion, it was in the post-Tridentine Church, that confession and communion were recognised as a central part of religious life. The parish church, with its upgraded role, and the parochial organisations, with the increasing involvement of clerics, were assigned with the supervision of lay participation in the sacraments and religious life. The Council promoted more frequent communion, although there was not a unanimous view on frequency. Reformers, such as Carlo Borromeo, stressed that communion had to be received every month and on the major feasts. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the laity received the sacrament regularly, but at least once a year, at Easter, was the minimum obligation that the Council of Trent maintained.⁹³

Parish priests were expected to keep account of the frequency with which the laity approached confession and communion. The parish priest of S. Leonardo, Antonio Bertolini showed the Inquisition that he kept the surveillance of his parishioners' religious conduct and explained that he had never confessed the members of the De Nis family, nor seen other members of clergy to do so, nor given them Communion, nor issued any licence so that they could receive communion elsewhere.⁹⁴ Gradually, the Holy Office relied more on priests' reports on the conduct of suspicious persons. Parish priests either appeared as delators or provided certificates that verified someone's regular confession and communion. But more important, the Inquisition called parish priests to give their testimony even in cases where the priest was not cited as witness against the accused person in the initial denunciation.

Apart from the members of the clergy, also the witnesses coming from the laity based their testimonies on someone's regular attendance of Mass and reception of communion. Some neighbours testified that the De Nis family were not good Christians because they had never seen them at Mass. The Spanish Diego Ortis de Vera, the first witness in the case of Abraam Righetto, testified that when he had met the accused in Florence he had regarded him as a Christian since he used to enter the

⁹³ Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 96 – 8.

⁹⁴ Processi (1585 – 1589), 80: "Dico de li homeni che le donne io non le conosco né mai li confessati né visti confessare né mancho li ho comunicati né data licentia che comunicano da altri".

churches with other Christians and to hear Mass on his knees.⁹⁵ Inspection of communion and confession was often a gendered issue. In this view, in 1570, Marietta from the S. Tomà parish reported that she had never seen the members, and especially the women, of a nearby suspicious household in the Frari area, in the church. Marietta's husband, Sabba gave the same emphasis too.⁹⁶ The same remarks were also made by the witness Cecilia, who testified in the investigation into the De Nis family in 1585: "Every day I go to the church but I have never seen the family's women there, or going to confession".⁹⁷

The attendance at Mass, confession and communion were part of a wider scale of signs that denoted piety and religious orthodoxy in public. Avoidance or negligence to conform to these signs might have resulted in arousing suspicion. António Saldagna claimed that every time that the Ave Maria was rung in Rialto, Michele Vaz, his son Diogo and his brother Giorgio Lopes were not there. He added that he had paid attention to that incident and he had found out that the three men had left Rialto shortly before the Ave Maria in order to avoid kneeling and reciting.⁹⁸ In 1570, Baldassarre de Valenti informed the tribunal that some people who lived in the S. Maria Nova parish, Cannaregio, were "Marani overo Zudei", despite their Christian dress. Every time they met the sacraments, they turned round and entered the shops. Besides they had never been to church.⁹⁹ In 1579, the Spanish Juan Martin de Urchisso suspected some Portuguese because being in their company every time he wanted to enter a church, they always found an excuse in order not to follow him.¹⁰⁰ In 1621, Giovanni Gemma reported that with some others were scandalised

⁹⁵ Processi (1570 – 1572), 43: "Et lui entrava nella chiesa con il signor don Aloysio da Tholedo fratello della signora duchessa et con altri Christiani spagnoli et ingenochiava alla messa con gli altri et stava alla messa".

⁹⁶ Processi (1561 – 1570), 134, 135: "Io non li ho mai visti andar a messa nè loro nè le sue donne"; "Le sue donne non vanno mai fuori di casa ... La mia cassa è vicina alla sua et mai le ho vedute uscir de case già sei mesi".

⁹⁷ Processi (1585 – 1589), 81: "Io ogni dì vado a messa in la detta giesia nè mai ho visto lì ste' ditte done ... nè mai le ho viste a confessarsi".

⁹⁸ Processi (1571 – 1580), 134: "considerai il tempo che sonava l'Ave Maria in Rialto si partiva da me il che, considerando io spese volte et fatto la spia, ho scoperto che poco avanti l'Ave Maria tutti fuggivano per non inginocchiarsi e dir l'Ave Maria".

⁹⁹ Processi (1561 – 1570), 133: "una casa nella quale habita Marani overo Zudei che vanno vestiti alla christiana con capelli de veluto in testa, li quali, quando s'imbatteno ad incontrar il santissimo Sacramento, li voltano la schena et per non vederlo entrano nelle botteghe et non vanno mai in chiesa"; on the case see, 32, 52.

¹⁰⁰ Processi (1571 – 1580), 147: "et spesso nell'intrar in chiesa ch'io faceva costoro pigliavan qualche scusa et non volevan intrare "; 148: "Et come passamo in chiesa, lui non volse intrare et se partì via et io andai alla chiesa".

when they saw Jorge Francisco Diaz pass by SS. Ermagora e Fortunato (S. Marcuola) and neglect to take off his hat.¹⁰¹

It was often foreigners, who unaware of the local context of ritualistic devotion, might have failed in conforming to external signs of public piety. Though from a quite different context, we get a glimpse of the significance of foreignness into a local context from the case of Aurora Gemma. After having lived in Poland for a long time, Aurora Gemma with her husband, Marco da Domo, settled near the village of Sovernigo outside Treviso. In 1625, she was accused, among much else, of Protestant inclinations. Sebastiano Dino, priest in the village of Paese, maintained that he held her for a good Catholic and explained how some of the villagers might have ended up identifying her as a Protestant:

It might have been a bad villager that said something against her. The reason for which he thought that she was a Lutheran, might have been that at the beginning when this woman came to stay in the village, under the Old Priest, she used to wear a hat in church in the Polish style. That event had disturbed the villagers who thought that she was a Lutheran. For this reason the priest warned her not to use the hat and she stopped wearing it. *On re-reading he said:* It was also said that she wore the hat even when the sacrament was elevated.¹⁰²

After the initial investigations, the Inquisition finally dropped the proceedings against Gemma and her husband. Though the evidence offered to the Inquisition might not indicate it, Gemma's past might suggest her Protestant views, or even libertine inclinations, as some of her family were far from pious Catholics.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Processi (1608 – 1632), 63: “se non una volta detto Georgio che passò per la chiesa dei Servi et non si cavò il capello, con scandalo de noi altri che lo vedessimo”.

¹⁰² ASV, SU, b. 80, proc. “De Domo Marco, Gemma Aurora”, test. Sebastiano Dina, 29 April 1625: “può esser che qualche contadino havesse detto qualche cosa, perche vi è qualche contadino cattivo. et l’occasione di trattarla da luterana deve esser stata perche questa donna nel principio che vene a star in Villa sotto il Prete Vecchio portava il capello in testa all’usanza Polaca in chiesa il che causo qualche sbibiglio che lei fosse luterana, perilche da quel Pre fu avvertita, et lei depose il capello, et cessò di portarlo. In relectione dixit: si diceva anco che gia teneva il capello in testa anco quando si alzava il santissimo sacramento”.

¹⁰³ Her uncle, the Dominican Giovanni Battista Clario was imprisoned as a Lutheran, her brother Giovanni Battista Clario was imprisoned in Rome with Tommaso Campanella before departing for Graz, and her first husband, Zuan Battista Gemma, had been investigated by the Inquisition in 1565 before leaving Venice for Cracow: F. Ambrosini, “Between Heresy and Free Thought, between the Mediterranean and the North. Heterodox Women in Seventeenth-Century Venice”, in *Mediterranean Urban Culture 1400 – 1700*, ed. A. Cowan (Exeter, 2000), 86 – 9.

However, examples from the Venetian context illustrate how the non – conformity of foreigners to local customs might give rise to crypto-Jewish suspicions. In November 1585, Giovanni Battista Guato, the priest of the S. Geremia parish, reappeared before the Holy Office, after his appearance in October 1585 in the proceedings against the De Nis family, this time to report some strange events that had taken part during the funeral of an old woman in the church of S. Marcilian, Cannaregio. Guato told the Inquisition that he had been amazed by the funeral service's rapid completion and the relatives' limited participation without crying or doing anything else that the occasion required. During the funeral he had also heard from other priests that the relatives had asked that the burial take place at night only with the presence of a priest and a deacon without a lot of solemnity. But a priest from the parish had warned them: "Be careful, you have to do as the other people do, otherwise you might get into trouble".¹⁰⁴

Bernardo Giordano, the parish priest of S. Marcilian, confirmed that the relatives of the dead woman had asked for the corpse to be transferred directly to the cemetery of S. Cristoforo on Murano but the priest had objected stressing that they had to follow the customs of the city and religion.¹⁰⁵ Giordano reported that the family, (whose name appears to have been Silva) had recently settled in the parish and he had not much familiarity with them, but he had seen some of them go to church. However, he observed some unusual funeral practices that he admitted were not customary in Venice and he had never seen them before. The body was transferred to church in a coffin placed inside another. Earlier when he had visited the woman he found her in bed with a candle and an image of the Virgin above her head and a candle below her feet but later the image had disappeared. Instead, the

¹⁰⁴ Processi (1585 – 1589), 173 – 174: "Da doi mesi io fui invitato a un funerale nella chiesa de San Marciliano dove andai et de lì col capitolo con la croce andassemo lì vicino a una casa dove fu portato una cassa nella qual si diceva che era una donna dentro et fu portata in chiesa, acompagnata dal clero con la croce, dove li fu fatto l'offitio solito con prestezza. Et vedendo io questa prestezza che pareva che non si potesse dir un Pater Noster che stessee bene, io sentava appresso el piovano de la Madalena o de San Marcuola et de sopra stava nel luocho parimente el piovan de San Marciliano. Et ragionavano che quelli de la casa volevano sepolir questo corpo con un prete et un zago de sera et che un prete de chiesa era stato valenthomo che dicono che ha la lingua spagnola, el quale era stato alla casa di questo morto et detto: 'Gliele guardate che bisogna far quel che fa la zente e altramente ve ne potria intervener male' [...] tornando io con alcuni de quelli o de la Madalena o de San Marcuola, che non me ricordo bene, gli dissi che restava scandalizzato che si havesse havuto così pocha cura dove andava questo corpo non si essendosi visti alcuni di casa né pianger né altro".

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 175: "Dapoi, signor, fu fatto el funeral. I la voleva portar de casa alla sepoltura a San Christophoro de Muran e mi obstai aciò che facessero quel che porta la città et la religion".

corpse was wrapped up in white linen. Later the body was placed in the coffin, which earlier had been covered inside with white linen. Some mortar was thrown over the corpse in the coffin. Later in church the coffin was covered with a black sheet that bore red crosses. Bernardo Giordano admitted that he had heard that the Jews used to wrap up the dead in linen before the burial.¹⁰⁶ Those unusual practices alerted the Inquisition which ordered the exhumation of the body. However, although Eusebio Renato, a former Jew and Governor of the *Pia Casa dei Catecumeni*, examined the corpse and declared that the burial had taken place “in the manner of Jews or Portuguese, or judaizing Portuguese”, the tribunal did not proceed to further action.¹⁰⁷

The witnesses’ testimonies about the suspicious customs of the Silva family made direct references to the family’s alleged foreign origin. The parish priest, Giordano reported that it was a common rumour [*per publica voce e fama*] that the family was Spanish. Other witnesses from the S. Marcilian parish also referred to the family as foreigners.¹⁰⁸ Some accusations of alleged crypto-Judaism suggest that the offence was identified with foreignness or that foreigners coming to locals’ notice were a source of anxiety. After the plague of 1575 – 77, the Venetian authorities appeared to have been quite xenophobic.¹⁰⁹ The city’s population, which had reached a peak in the 1560s, was decimated in the plague. After the plague there was a recovery that reached another peak in the 1610s, as Venice witnessed waves of migration from its mainland [*terraferma*], the Mediterranean colonies and the rest of Italy.¹¹⁰ In the government’s attempt to regulate the foreigners’ presence, in 1583 the *Esecutori contro la bestemmia* was assigned to supervise them by issuing relevant

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 175 – 76: “Et così fu portato questo corpo in la mia chiesa in una cassa, anzi erano doi casse, una dentro l’altra, ma io non viddi el corpo. Et la prima volta, quando i me mandò a chiamar, la viddi destessa in terra in camera con do candele de cera, una in testa et l’altra dai piedi con una imagine de nostra Donna de la testa, ma io non li ho visto né testa né cosa alcuna o figura ma era rivolta in una cosa bianca che pareva renso. Dapoi viddi meterla in cassa et nella cassa prima messero dentro una cosa bianca de renso et poi ci messero una quarta de calcina viva de sora del corpo et fu poi portata in chiesa mia che li missi un pano con la croce suso che era panno de tella de Sangallo negro con le crose rosse che lo tolsi alla Madonna dal Horto”; 177: “Io ho inteso che li Hebrei li revolgi in un lenzuolo novo et che li porta alla sepoltura”.

¹⁰⁷ Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 127; on the case see also below 36 – 8.

¹⁰⁸ Processi (1585 – 1589), 175, 180.

¹⁰⁹ R. C. Davis, *Shipbuilders of the Venetian Arsenal. Workers and Workplace in the Preindustrial City* (Baltimore and London, 1991), 94.

¹¹⁰ D. Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft. Domestic Service in Renaissance Venice, 1400 – 1600* (Baltimore and London, 1996), 106 – 7; Chojnacka, *Working Women*, 83 – 90.

permits.¹¹¹ In an earlier attempt, sometime in the 1550s, the Council of Ten had authorised the magistracy of the *Sette Savii in Rialto*,¹¹² but it was the Esecutori, which as late as the eighteenth century assiduously monitored the foreigners' presence in the city by continuously issuing proclamations.¹¹³ A testimony from an investigation of 1570 illustrates the anxiety about foreigners and their identification with Marranos. Asked in a suggestive manner if she knew any Marranos in the Frari area, the witness Marietta from the parish of S. Tomà did not hesitate to reply: "Yes sir, where we live there are some people that we call foreigners and we do not know another name for them".¹¹⁴ Foreigners, whose behaviour remained ambiguous by their distancing from the locals, preferring to maintain their distinct lifestyle, associating with other compatriots or not conforming with Venetian customs, were often viewed with some distrust.¹¹⁵

A wide range of signs delineated piety, devotion and loyalty in public and their contribution to the "theatre culture" of late Renaissance cities is paramount. For Venice, attention has been paid to those large-scale rituals, such as the Corpus Christi rite or the marriage of the Doge to the sea that transcended localities and unified loyalties, and the sacred in the city's prestigious centre.¹¹⁶ However, at the level of every-day life in parishes and neighbourhoods, signs as expressions of piety were also widespread and it is this sign-system that is more difficult to gauge. Thomas Coryate acutely observed with some contempt the ritualistic significance of the Ave Maria:

Also there is another very superstitious custome used not only in Venice, but also in all other cities and townes of Italy where I have beene, which is likewise observed (as I understand) in all cities, townes, and parishes whatsoever of all Italy, in which they differ (as I think) from all Christian Nations, that at noone and the setting of the sunne, all men, women and children must kneele, and say their Ave Maria bare-headed

¹¹¹ ASV, Consiglio di Dieci, Comuni, reg. 37, 20 December 1583.

¹¹² BNM, *Ordini delli clarissimi signori Sette Savii. In materia di quelli alloggianno Forestieri* (I have consulted the copy D 097D 265).

¹¹³ Most of the magistracy's proclamations can be found in ASV, Esecutori contro la bestemmia, b. 76, in two bundles of documents entitled "Proclami a stampa 1548 – 1796" and "Alcune Parti, Proclami, Leggi a stampa del Consiglio de'X ed Esecutori ... 1548 – 1796". The control of foreigners included also Jewish foreigners in the Ghetto: for instance, *Ibid.*, Proclamation of 1678.

¹¹⁴ Processi (1561 – 1570), 134.

¹¹⁵ A. Cowan, "Foreigners and the City. The Case of the Immigrant Merchant", in Cowan, *Mediterranean Urban Culture*, 50 – 3.

¹¹⁶ E. Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981), 119 – 34, 212 – 23.

wheresoever they are, eyther in their houses or in the streetes, when the Ave Marie bell ringeth.¹¹⁷

Ranging from saintly images and shrines to religious rites, and despite their differences, all these expressions constituted “venerated objects” that extended the sacrality outside the church through neighbourhoods, parishes and piazzas. Their function was far from just a spiritual one. Those venerated objects required a performance and in this view they evoked reverential meaning and behaviour, thus contributing to the theatricality of the daily social life in a Renaissance city.¹¹⁸ Some of these signs might have been local expressions of piety whereas others were widely recognised.

The importance of those signs at the every-day level of parishes and neighbourhoods is substantiated by the iconoclasm with which adherents to Reformation ideas reacted against them. For instance, reacting to this ritualisation of everyday life, Evangelicals in Venice were scornful towards those practices. In 1548, the priest Francesco testified that after having taken off his hat and said the Ave Maria when the bells at S. Moisè rung, one Iseppo had told him that he should not recite the Ave Maria but the Lord’s Prayer.¹¹⁹ In 1557, the young Georgio Fracassuto, a saddler from Udine was accused of Protestantism. One Pasqualin, *spadaro* and one Zuan Iacomo, saddler, who had escaped to “Germany or Poland where preached the bishop Vergerio”, were supposed to have initiated Fracassuto into Protestantism. Giovanni Maria da Bergamo, Fracassuto’s former employer, told the Inquisition: “My employee Georgio is a corrupted Lutheran ... and as many times happened, when the holy sacrament passes as it is taken to some sick, [Georgio] never leaves his position to honour it, as the others do” Even more suggestively, Francesco Roman, another employer of Fracassuto, reported:

I know that he gets mixed up in this false religion and among the other signs that I have seen of this, I have seen that when the holiest sacrament is carried through the city and it passes sometimes either in front of my shop, or nearby, while we used to go out of the

¹¹⁷ Coryate, *Crudities*, 255 – 56.

¹¹⁸ E. Muir, “The Virgin on the Street Corner. The Place of the Sacred in Italian Cities”, in *The Renaissance. Italy and Abroad*, ed. J. J. Martin (London and New York, 2003), 279 – 96.

¹¹⁹ Martin, *Venice’s Hidden Enemies*, 92.

shop to honour [the sacrament], as is required, he never does as the others, but he always either runs off or does not come out of the shop.¹²⁰

Signs of expression in public served multiple purposes. Apart from edifying the faith of the laity, signs attracted the menace of adversaries and at the same time defined religious deviance. The Counter-Reformation spirit whether directly or not made their observance necessary. In 1551, the Council of Trent stipulated the public nature of the Corpus Christi processions.¹²¹ The Catholic Reformation had its impact on the “theatre culture” at the parochial level, too. In this view, it was the confraternities, for instance, that had a key role. The confraternity of S. Maria della Vita in Bologna which obliged its members to show their devotion publicly when they passed images of the Virgin or saints, is a good example of this trend. In late-sixteenth century Venice there was an obvious increase in parish-based eucharistic confraternities that superseded supra-parochial foundations.¹²² The increasing processional promotion of the veneration of the Host, the parochial confraternities’ involvement in accompanying the Host to the sick and the proliferation of Sacrament confraternities, among much else, required a performance on behalf of the faithful, thus leaving their mark on the social life of parishes and neighbourhoods. Overall, at the parochial level and beyond confraternities were expected to make their role more public.¹²³ A sort of solemnity is to be found in most manifestations of religiosity, as for instance, in Venetian funeral rites which, although differing according to the social status of the dead and the family, usually involved the participation of the parish clergy and some of the clergy from neighbouring parishes.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ A. del Col, ed., *L’Inquisizione nel Patriarcato e Diocesi di Aquileia 1557 – 1559* (Trieste, 1998), 4: “Il mio lavorente Zorzi è marciissimo lutheran ... oltre che, se è occorso, come più volte occorse, che sia passato il sacratissimo sacramento portandosi a qualche infermo, mai si ha mosso del suo asio como faceano li altri per farli riverentia”; 5: “So che participa di questa falsa fede perché, tra li altri segni che ho visti in lui, ho visto che quando si porta il sacratissimo sacramento per la città et talvolta che passa per avanti la mia botega, overo poco lontano, solevo tutti nui altri uscir da botega et far la debita riverentia che semo obligati, et tamen lui mai faceva como li altri, me sempre o li voltava la schena o non usciva da botega”.

¹²¹ C. F. Black, “The Public Face of Post-Tridentine Italian Confraternities”, *Journal of Religious Studies*, 28, 1 (2004): 89.

¹²² R. Mackenney, “Devotional Confraternities in Renaissance Venice”, in *Voluntary Religion*, ed. W. J. Sheils and D. Wood (Oxford, 1986), 90; R. Mackenney, “The Scuole Piccole of Venice: Formations and Transformations”, in *The Politics of Ritual Kinship. Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, ed. N. Terpstra (Cambridge and New York, 2000), 179.

¹²³ Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 29 – 30, 76 – 8, 98, 105; Black, “The Public Face”, 94.

¹²⁴ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 126; idem, *Rich and Poor*, 76 – 7.

The post-Tridentine intensification of piety resulted in a ritualisation of everyday life and the elevation of those ritualistic behaviours to indispensable signs of orthodoxy. In this view, the participation in behaviour norms and the observance of symbolic rites or actions publicly performed and held as signs of devotion and piety, could be a secure way to remove any suspicion, and to maintaining or enforce the identity of a sincere Catholic. In 1621, the deacon of SS. Ermagora e Fortunato (S. Marcuola), Leonardo de Nigris recalled that every year on Good Friday night the Diaz, as some other Christian families did, had placed on the front door of their house two lighted torches when the procession passed by. Similarly, Giovanni Francesco Gemma confirmed that he regarded as a Christian sign that the Diaz lighted torches on Good Friday.¹²⁵

Often witnesses relied on those signs of public devotion and inspected whether they were faithfully observed in order to verify suspicions that already existed. Suspicious of the De Nis family, some neighbours had become cautious towards them and watchful of their activities. The witness Cecilia testified that she had always been mindful to observe the family when the Ave Maria was rung, because she had never seen them in church or take off their hats when passing in front of churches and she had heard that they were Marranos. She had observed that during the Ave Maria the De Nis never kneeled, nor took their hats off, nor recited it.¹²⁶

Patterns of behaviour that Christian witnesses regarded as signs of Christian adherence were recognised by Jewish witnesses alike. In 1634, Isac Zacuto reported that after Andrea Nunciata's departure from the Ghetto, he noticed that Nunciata wore the black hat and lived as a Christian taking off his hat when the Ave Maria was rung. Similarly, the Jew Zacharias Callò reported that in Ragusa Andrea Nunciata had worn the Christian black hat, associated with Christians and it had been said that

¹²⁵ Processi (1608 – 1632), 62: “So che la sera del Venere Santo mettevano doi torzi impizzadi sopra la loro porta quando passava la processione [...] Li detti doi torzi li mettevano ogn’anno su la porta la sera del Venerdì Santo, accesi come fanno delle altre famiglie christiane”; 64: “Ho visto in loro anco segno di christiano nel far mettere doi torzi accesi sopra la porta della casa loro la sera del Venere Santo mentre passava la processione”.

¹²⁶ See note 189.

Nunciata entered the churches with the rosary in his hand, thus performing the acts of a Christian.¹²⁷

“Marrano” Identity and Witnesses

The testimonies on the suspicious burial of the woman from the Silva family in 1585 epitomised the way that some witnesses came to recognise crypto-Jewish practices. The witnesses unanimously reported that they had found those funeral practices unusual for the Venetian customs and recognised the dead woman and her family as foreigners. The parish priests Giovanni Battista Guato and Bernardo Giordano testified that they had heard that the family were Spanish or Portuguese. But Giordano admitted that when his sub-deacon had talked with the relatives he had not heard Spanish. Also when the woman had gone to confession, she spoke good Italian. The friar Deodato from the monastery of S. Cristoforo referred to the dead woman as a Florentine. Giovanni Battista from the S. Marcilian parish and the Prior Anselmo Patavino identified the family as Spanish too.

However, when it came to the issue of crypto-Judaism and Marranism, the testimonies of the two parish priests, Giovanni Battista Guato and Bernardo Giordano, began to diverge, thus illustrating that the nature of crypto-Judaism and Marranism could have been ambiguous, even to members of the clergy. Guato told the Inquisition that he had heard a discussion between some boatmen at the S. Geremia ferry about the De Nis family on the day of their arrest: “Thank God that they will now rid this city of the Marranos”. Another one had added: “They have left us the worst of the lot – the one who lives near the priest of S. Marcilian”.¹²⁸ That discussion made Guato suspicious and having been in S. Marcilian, he decided to find out what was going on with that family. Having asked a girl aged about six about the residents of a specific house, Guato was told: “This is the house of the

¹²⁷ Processi (1633 – 1637), 53 – 54: “et lo vedo col capel Negro et fa vita da christiano cavandosi il capello quando sona l’Ave Maria”; 64: “...lo viddi col segno da christiano, col capello negro a praticar con Christiani et si diceva che era veduto ad entrar nelle chiese de Christiani con la corona et far atti da christiano et che era christiano”.

¹²⁸ Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 102.

Marranos”, referring to the Silva family.¹²⁹ For Giovanni Battista Guato the pieces of evidence which came together and were identified as “Marranism”, were the Iberian origin of the suspicious persons, the rumours about them as Marranos and their customs that deviated from Catholic orthodoxy, or at least, the Catholic customs of Venice. And given his previous involvement in the De Nis trial, Guato connected clearly Marranism with crypto-Judaism.

On the other hand, Bernardo Giordano told the Inquisition that neither before, nor after the suspicious funeral had he heard that the Silva family were Marranos, but that they were Portuguese or Spanish. To the Inquisitor’s insistent questions, Giordano hesitantly admitted that a couple of times before and after the funeral he had said: “I hold them for Marranos”. The interrogator blamed Giordano for not informing the Inquisition or the Patriarch about the Marrano family and the priest found himself even more confused on the word “Marrano”. He claimed that he had called the family Marranos after he saw their funeral practices, namely the wrapping of the body in the linen sheet.¹³⁰ The tribunal continued to press Giordano and the following dialogue, which concluded with the priest’s contradictions to his earlier testimony, stands as an example of two different understandings of the nature of crypto-Judaism and definition of “Marranos”:

It was said to him that earlier he confirmed that he had said before the death of the woman that the family was Marranos. This implies that he already knew that. Given that and combined with that he saw wrapping the corpse in the white sheet and using mortar should have led him to recognise that the members of the family were not good

¹²⁹ Processi (1585 – 1589), 174 – 175: “havendo io sospetto de donde era uscito questo corpo et havendo inteso dire che erano Marani questi, me fermai lì vicino alla casa dove era uscito questo corpo, dove vicino viddi una putta che poteva esser de 6 anni in circa assentata lì a pè del ponte et gli dimandai che habitava in quella casa et quella putta me respose: ‘Prima è ca’ Malipiero’. Io gli dissi: ‘Non dico quella, ma dico quella là in corte apresso’. Et alhora la putta disse: ‘La è quella di Marani’”.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 177: “Io, nanzi et doppo che fu sepolta questa donna, non ho inteso dire che questi siano Marani ma che sono Portoghesi o Spagnoli.”; “I lo volevano portar subito là alla chiesa de San Christophoro di giorno et io posso haver ditto ad alcuno: ‘Io li ho per Marani’. Ei dictum che chiarisca de sì o de no, se lui ha detto ad alcuno che questi de la detta casa de detto morto erano Marani et che volevano sepelir quel corpo di notte o di sera, respondit: Io ho detto ‘Io gli ho per Marani’ ma non mi ricordo a chi l’habia detto et l’ho detto do et 3 volte et questo l’ò detto avanti che sopelisse detto corpo et doppo.”; “Ei dictum che, havendo lui saputo che questa famiglia era marana, era debito suo darne notitia a questo Santo Offitio e a monsignore reverendissimo patriarcha et dica che diligentia ne ha fatto, respondit: Io non li havuti per Marani ma ho ditto quelle parole dapoi, vedendo un tal effetto. Ei dictum che dechiarì quando doppoi disse queste parole et che vuol dire in quelle parole ‘havendo visto quel effetto’, respondit: Quello ‘doppoi’, io intendo ‘doppoi che la è morta’. In quanto a quelle parole ‘doppo che ho visto quel effetto’ ho inteso doppo che viddi quel effetto che veddi a meter quel corpo morto in quella cassa revolto in quella tella et che li fu messo dentro quella calcina”.

Christians but Jews and that they behaved as Christians only externally in order to hide their Judaism.

[*Giordano*] *answered*: I did not hold them for Marranos for sure, but afterwards having seen such events, I held them for Marranos.

It was said to him, regarding them as such, why he buried the woman in the Christian way without informing the Holy Office or the Patriarch.

[*Giordano*] *answered*: If someone has said that they were Marranos, I do not confirm that I have also said it.¹³¹

For the interrogator, Marranism constituted a genuine deviation from Christianity and it was inextricably related to Judaism. A Marrano was a potential crypto-Jew. But for the parish priest Giordano the word “Marrano” was one of vague meaning. Marranism and crypto-Judaism were not necessarily identical. “Marrano” denoted a religiously suspicious person, someone that was not firmly attached to Catholicism but not adherent to any other religion.

In 1579, the Portuguese Felix da Castello from the S. Giovanni Novo parish denounced his wife Marina dal Castello, or Marina “grecha”. Among much else, Felix told the tribunal: “My wife does not know how to recite the Paternoster neither in Latin nor in Greek and sometimes calls me Lutheran and Marrano because I am Portuguese”.¹³² In 1580, Margarita, wife of Girolamo Vitriario, the bailiff of the Holy Office, who had been a neighbour of Gaspar Ribiera in the S. Maria Formosa parish, testified:

I do not know anything else apart from that many times I heard Gaspar Ribiera shouting at Giulia his servant. And leaning out of the window-ledge, Giulia told me: ‘This Lutheran eats meat on Friday and Saturday’, referring to Ribiera. That time I did not know what Lutheran meant and I just laughed.

¹³¹ Ibid., 178: “Ei dictum che lui di sopra ha affermato d’haver detto che questa famegia era marana avanti la morte de la detta, il che presupon che lui lo sapeva, il che congiunto con haver visto el modo d’infassar el corpo col renso bianco et meterli la calcina, lo doveva redure in cognitione che quelli non erano boni Christiani ma Hebrei et che facevano questi atti exteriori da Christiani per coprire el loro Hebraysmo, respondit: Mi non li ho habudi per Marani certo ma dapoi, vedendo un tal effetto, li ho habudi per Marani. Ei dictum perché, havendoli per tali, fece el funerale al modo de Christiani senza farlo saper al Santo Offitio o a monsignor illustrissimo patriarcha, respondit: Io, se ha ditto un certo che li haveva per Marani, per questo non lo affermo”.

¹³² ASV, SU, b. 45, proc. “Marina dal Castello”, den. Felix da Castello: “Et detta mia moglie non sa pater nostro ne alla latina ne alla grecha et alle volte me chiama a me lutherano et marano perche son portoghese”.

Some months later, Margarita was called again before the tribunal, where she said: “I confirm all those that I testified in my first interrogation. Moreover, I remember that the aforementioned Giulia from the window-ledge had told me: “My dear, these Marrano dogs, these traitors eat meat on Friday and Saturday”.¹³³ Having been cited by Gaspar Ribiera as a witness for defence, Matteo, scribe in the Sacrament confraternity in the S. Maria Formosa parish, where Gaspar Ribiera had served as *gastaldo*, was asked what he would have thought of a Portuguese who appeared as a Christian but secretly had married his son to a Jewess. Matteo replied disarmingly: “I would have thought that he was a wicked person, a Lutheran and even worse”.¹³⁴ At the end of the interrogation, Matteo continued in the same vein:

It was said to him if he remembers anything else, regarding religious matters that he wants to add for his conscience’s sake, either in favour of Gaspar or against him.

[*Matteo*] *answered*: If I knew anything I would say it, because I do dislike those sorts of persons, Lutherans and similar ones.¹³⁵

Earlier, having been asked whether Ribiera was known around the S. Maria Formosa neighbourhood as “marrano” or “the marrano”, Matteo had admitted that Ribiera was called nothing else but Marrano.¹³⁶ However, Matteo failed in identifying the nature of the offence that Ribiera was accused of, although at the beginning of the

¹³³ Processi (1579 – 1586), 96: “Io non so altro se non che più volte senti cridare con una Iulia che era massara del deto Gaspar Ribiera et veniva sul pergolo de la casa di esso Gasparo et diceva: ‘Questo lutherano’, parlando de Gasparo il vecchio, ‘magna carne venere et sabbato!’ E in quel tempo non sapeva che volesse dir lutherano et me ne rideva”; the verbs “sapeva” and “me rideva” which in standard Italian are third person singular, in non Tuscan variants and especially in Venice also stood for first person singular. See also the linguistic note in Processi, Indici Generali, 65; Processi (1579 – 1586), 212: “In quanto a quello che ho deposto et che io intesi dalla ditta Giulia l’ho detto et de novo lo dico per la verità. Et di più me son ricordata che la ditta Giulia, stando sul pergolo della casa de ditto Gasparo Ribiera me disse a me: ‘Cara sorella, sti’cani marani, traditori magnano carne de venere e de sabo!’”

¹³⁴ Ibid., 296: “Interrogatus che iudicio facesse esso testimonio de un portoghese apparentemente christiano che in secreto desse per moglie a un suo figliolo una hebrea, respondit: Io crederei che’l fosse un tristo homo lutherano et pezo”.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 298: “Ei dictum se si ricorda de altro, tanto a favor come contra deto Gasparo pertinente alla nostra santa fede che lo voglia dire et scaricar la sua conscientia, respondit: Se’l sapesse, lo diria, ché non voglio ben a questa sorte de persone, a Lutherani, a simili”.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 297: “Ei dictum se per la contrata de detta chiesa de Santa Maria Formosa, parlandose de deto Gaspar, se gli diceva marano o il marano, respondit: Po’ signor sì, non si conosceva per altro nome che per il marano”.

interrogation the Inquisitor posed two suggestive questions that implied that the crime under investigation was relevant to crypto-Jewish beliefs and practices.¹³⁷

In 1584, Giovanni Andrea Arcomani from the S. Antonin parish, Castello, denounced Francesco Fortunato for saying that only Baptism was sufficient and the Confirmation was just for the profit of priests and bishops.¹³⁸ The witness Giulio Chiozzi testified that he had been informed that Fortunato “was a Jew who had become a Christian, [he was] a Spanish and Marrano”. Later Chiozzi gave his own opinion about Fortunato: “I think that he is a corrupted Lutheran and a Jew and infidel and I would have denounced him, but he left Venice suddenly”.¹³⁹

It emerges, therefore, from witnesses’ testimonies that within the context of every-day life the words “Lutheran” and “Marrano” were used interchangeably. The confusion of the words “Lutheran” and “Marrano” indicated that for many witnesses the two words had an identical use. They denoted heretical conduct, even loosely defined, or at least, behaviour non-conformed to Catholic piety. It is not clear whether those terms denoted deviance with specific characteristics; or whether the signs of “Lutheranism” were the same with those of “Marranism”. Nevertheless, what counted most was the detachment from Catholicism.

It is not easy to outline the possible sources and roots of such an identification and overlapping. We might catch a glimpse by a consideration of the Church’s role in preaching against heretics. Preachers constantly directed the flock’s attention towards heresy and urged that they should be alerted to heretical activity. But it seems that there was not any serious attempt at classifying heresy and making the laity capable of distinguishing between various deviations. In this view, Catholic anti-Protestant propaganda often identified Protestantism with Judaism. Anti-trinitarianism and Sabbatarianism made some Catholics find resemblances between aspects of the Reformation and Judaism. Catholic propagandists might have drawn on certain

¹³⁷ Ibid., 296: “Et primo interrogatus ex offitio se esso ha inteso dire che molt’anni sono, molti Portoghesi non potendo nei lor paesi star sicuramente et viver da Hebrei, se sono partiti de le loro patrie con li loro beni et familie et se son sparsi in diverse parti et particolarmente in Italia, vivendo apparentemente da Christiani et in secreto da Hebrei, onde vengono chiamati Marani.”; for the second suggestive question, see chapter 2, note 159.

¹³⁸ ACPV, CSI, b. 2 (1561 – 1585), 319: “detto Francesco Fortunato comezo come a drisprizzare la santissima Cresma con dire che non era bisogno ne necessaria la cresa ma solo il battesimo basta et che questo è un guadagno di preti et di Vescovi”.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 327: “mi disse chel detto Francesco era stato hebreo et che era fatto christiano, et che era spagnolo, et marano”; 330: “et quanto a me io ho il detto francesco per un lutheran marzo e per giudeo et infidele e sarei venuto a denuntiarlo, ma si parti in un subito da Venetia”.

aspects of Protestant literature, such as Luther's treatise in 1523, *That Jesus Christ was born a Jew*, where he argued that the Jews had done well to resist Catholic conversion. Furthermore, Marrano apologetic literature, such as Samuel Usque's treatise *Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel*, argued that many Jewish converts from Spain, who found refuge in England, Germany and France, resorted to Protestant beliefs in order to blame the Catholic Church:

that generation of converts has spread all over the whole realm, and though a long time has elapsed, these converts still give an indication of their non-Catholic origin by the new Lutheran beliefs which are presently found among them, for they are not comfortable in the religion which they received so unwillingly.¹⁴⁰

Another example, this time from the Venetian context, illustrates the role of preaching. Though not relating to Judaism, the relevant parallel can be drawn, thus exemplifying the relation between preaching and a possible shaping of perceptions of heresy. In a 1596 letter to Rome, the nuncio Gratiani reported an incident that drew the Signoria's intervention. During his Lenten sermon in the S. Giovanni e Paolo church, explaining Luther's views on Purgatory, a Dominican preacher also referred to the Orthodox reservation or refutation of the truth of Purgatory. As a result some Greeks, who attended the sermon, complained to the Doge of being insulted by being named with the heretics. Subsequently, the Signoria ordered the Dominican to abstain from preaching.¹⁴¹ What is interesting in this incident is the way preachers sought to edify the laity. Analysing a delicate theological issue, the Dominican "mixed up the Greeks with Luther", as the nuncio admitted. But surely it was not due to the preacher's ignorance. What was obvious in the mind of a learned preacher did not mean that it was perceived as such by those who attended a sermon. Put otherwise, the discrepancies illustrated earlier in the witnesses' testimonies might have been the result of preaching that was not perceived as intended. Through preaching ordinary people might have been more alert to the existence of heretical activity or non-conforming conduct, but on the other hand, they were not always capable of recognising and classifying those features that separated them from non-

¹⁴⁰ J. Friedman, "The Reformation in Alien Eyes: Jewish Perceptions of Christian Troubles", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 14, 1 (1983): 31, 33.

¹⁴¹ Chambers and Pullan, *Venice. A Documentary History*, 336 – 37.

Catholics or non-Christians, especially when the latter often strove to maintain their beliefs and practices as secret as possible.

Furthermore, other testimonies suggest additional use and perceptions of the word “Marrano” in Venice. The term appeared either as a derogatory name for people of Iberian origin or even, as a name denotative for Spanish or Portuguese. In 1580, Giovanni Maria Zanasario, *nunzio* of the Sacrament confraternity in the S. Maria Formosa parish, told the Inquisition: “I have heard him [Gaspar Ribiera] called Marrano in the neighbourhood but I did not know that he was Portuguese”.¹⁴² After such a statement, in his next question, the Inquisitor sought to find the middle ground between the word “Portuguese” and “Marrano”: “He was asked if he had heard the said Portuguese Gaspar Ribiera, as he says, called marrano, if he ate meat during Lent, on vigils and other prohibited days”.¹⁴³ Zanasario’s use of the term “Marrano” ran through several testimonies. In 1581, another witness, Gaspar de Cremonesi, a trade agent at Rialto, made an identical use of the terms “Marrano” and “Spanish”: “Many times I have heard him [Ribiera] called the Marrano and other times Spanish”.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Simone Castellaro, a merchant from Milan, who lived in Venice, said: “I have heard all the Portuguese called Marranos”.¹⁴⁵ It is not easy to determine whether in these cases the word “Marrano” hinted at a suspicious religious identity too, and whether it was used for both Iberian Christians and Jews. Finally, it was the testimony of an outsider, the Jew Moisè Cardiel that completed this identification: “Both in this land [Venice] and in Italy it is usual to call someone from Spain a Marrano”.¹⁴⁶

However, it appeared that the word “Marrano” meant nothing to other witnesses, or so they said. In 1580, Mattea, Ribiera’s housemaid, told the Inquisition that after she had left her master’s house, some people in the S. Giovanni e Paolo church had told her that she had been with Marranos. But Mattea added: “I do not know with what intent those people said that Gaspar Ribiera was a Marrano, or what

¹⁴² Processi (1579 – 1586), 294: “Io l’ho sentito chiamar maran là in contrà che mi non saveva che’l fosse portoghese”.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 294 – 95: “Ei dictum se ha inteso dir che in casa del deto Gaspar Ribiera portoghese, come lui dice, che si diceva marano, si magnasse carne di Quaresima, le vigilie et altri dì prohibiti”.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 345: “Io ho inteso molte volte chiamarlo il marano et alle volte spagnolo”.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 355: “A tutti i Portoghesi ho inteso a dir marani”.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 305: “L’è solito che tanto in questa terra come in la Italia, come uno è spagniol vien chiamato maran”.

Marrano means”.¹⁴⁷ The noble Sebastiano Barbarigo, Ribiera’s landlord, testified that he had never used the word Marrano but he had only heard other people call Ribiera and his family “the Marranos”, and many others had told him: “those Marranos who live at your house”.¹⁴⁸

On the contrary, to the uncertainty, confusion, or ignorance that many witnesses expressed during their interrogations, the Holy Office promulgated a specific definition and approach to Marranism. This was particularly manifested in the Inquisitor’s questions during Gaspar Ribiera’s trial:

Those baptised Portuguese Jews, who did not want to live as Christians in Portugal, since the laws did not permit the residence of Jews in the country, left Portugal many years ago with their families and possessions for other places, particularly Italy. In Italy some lived openly as Jews, whereas others pretended to be Christians outwardly, but lived as Jews secretly. The latter group of Jews came to be known as Marranos.¹⁴⁹

Expressing an official attitude, the Inquisitor identified Marranism with Judaism, and the label of Marrano was intended only for those who practised Judaism secretly. However, it was the Jew Leo from the Venetian Ghetto, who gave another dimension: “I have heard that people always call Gaspar Ribiera Marrano but I do not know whether he is a good Christian or Jew”.¹⁵⁰ This time, the word “Marrano” equally denoted a devout Christian or a Jew. From this Jewish point of view, “Marrano” referred to someone’s past or ancestry. In this view, Marranos were all the violently converted Iberian Jews, regardless of whether they lived later as Christians or returned to Judaism. It is also interesting that, although referring to Ribiera, who stood trial for crypto-Judaism, the Jewish witness hinted that someone could have been a Jew in the guise of a Christian.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 99: “Signor no, mi non l’ho mai sentito mentre che son stata in casa sua ma l’ho ben sentito a dir dappoi che me son partida de là che ho inteso dir in giesia de San Zuane Polo, da non so chi, che me giera da drio Marani cioè che deto Gaspar Ribiera era marano ma io non conosco quelli che’l dissero [...] Io non so a che proposito loro dicessero che deto Gaspere fosse marano né manco quel che volesse dir marano”.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 301: “Io non li ho mai ditto questo nome ma ghe l’ho ben sentito a dir alli altri che li chiamavano: ‘I Marani’ et molti dicevano a me: ‘I Marani che stano nella tua casa’”.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 301: “già molti anni, per legge fata in Portogallo che non vi potesse star alcuno hebreo molti se batizorno et poi, per non voler vivere christianamente se partimo de Portogallo con le lor familie et beni, spargendosse per diverse parti del mondo et particolarmente de Italia, de quali alcuni scopertamente hano vissiuto da Hebrei, alcuni altri fingendo el christiano apparentemente, in secreto hano vissiuto da Hebrei et perciò questi vengono detti Marani”.

Furthermore, from the Church's perspective, while the Inquisitor attributed the word "Marrano" to crypto-Jews, some years earlier, in 1575, the Portuguese Dominican Henrique de Mello had defined as Marranos those Jews from Portugal, who lapsed openly to Judaism in the Italian cities. De Mello accused the Ribieras of crypto-Judaism before the Inquisition in Rome, which later sent the documents of De Mello's testimony to the Venetian tribunal, when the Ribiera case was under investigation. The Dominican testified:

I had been asked in Parma whether I knew anything about those Marranos who were judaizing. I think, if I remember well, I said that I really knew that in Venice there were many Jews, who in Portugal had lived as baptised Christians having gone to confession and Communion.¹⁵¹

De Mello reported an incident that had taken place in Venice. This serves as an example of what the witness understood as Marrano:

One evening at Rialto together with Giovanni Ribiera, a Portuguese, I saw that man I named above [ie a Portuguese], who had first had the black hat, but now I saw him with the yellow hat, publicly trading as a Jew. I got angry and I called "Gentleman", or something similar "come here!" I wanted to ask him about the hat he wore. But he got wise to what was going on and dashed off and did not wish to stop and speak. Giovanni Ribiera, who was with me, knowing that Portuguese well who was wearing the yellow beretta, started laughing and told me that there were many Portuguese like him.¹⁵²

Many Venetian witnesses showed unawareness of the Marrano identity and failed in classifying Marranism as adhering to Judaism. Anything relating to the Jewish religion existed only within the Ghettos' boundaries. Living outside the Ghettos signified adherence to Christianity; in this view, potential divisions that

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 313: "Io ho inteso per el vulgo che deto Gaspar sempre se chiamava el marano et io non son informato che lui sia bon christiano o iudeo".

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 367: "Mi fu domandato in Parma s'io sapevo alcuna cosa di questi Marani che giudaizzavano. Io credo se bene me ricordo che dicessi, ch'io sapevo veramente che in Venetia erano purassai Giudei, che in Portugallo vivevano da Cristiani batezzati et si confessavano et comunicavano".

¹⁵² Ibid., 367: "Et una sera, essendo io in Rialto assieme con Giovanni Ribiero portughese, viddi quello che ho nominato di sopra, qual haveva prima la berretta negra et allhora il viddi con la berretta gialla, negoziando pubblicamente da giudeo et m'alterai et mi voltai per chiamarlo, buttandogli una voce, dicendogli: 'O gentilhuomo', o simili cosa, 'Vien qua!' Volendogli dire che habito era quello che portava. Et lui accorgendosene scampò via et non si volse lasciar parlare. Et detto Giovanni Ribero

might have arisen were between devout and bad Catholics. During Gaspar Ribiera's trial, in a general but at the same time suggestive way, the Inquisitor constantly asked the witnesses what they would believe for a person, especially a Portuguese, who appeared to be a Christian outwardly but consented to his son's marriage to a Jewess.¹⁵³ Fabrizio Locatelli, the parish priest of S. Maria Formosa replied: "If something like this was true I would not have a good opinion that is, such a person would not be a good Christian".¹⁵⁴ Cesare Rinaldini, a priest in the parish too, responded: "I would think that person was a bad Christian".¹⁵⁵ Similarly, Giovanni Maria Zanasario, *nunzio* of the parish's Sacrament confraternity said: "If something like this happened I would have a bad opinion, but I have never heard anything".¹⁵⁶ Finally, Ribiera's landlord, Sebastiano Barbarigo, who became a lay deputy of the Inquisition in 1591, responded roundly: "I would have a bad, or better still, the worst opinion about the person's Christian piety".¹⁵⁷ From members of the clergy to the laity, these Venetian witnesses adopted an identical understanding of pieces of evidence that indicated alleged crypto-Judaism.

In contrast, a substantially different picture emerges considering the testimonies of Spanish and Portuguese witnesses. In 1580, Juan Zornoza, son of the Spanish Consul in Venice, straightforwardly presented a completely different understanding of evidence related to crypto-Judaism. Testifying in Ribiera's trial, he said: "unless these Portuguese had been commissioned by the King [of Spain] to do business [in Italy], I would have taken them for Jews and having married his son to a Jewess I would regard him a bad old Jew".¹⁵⁸

In the sixteenth century, many accusations of crypto-Judaism were brought by Spanish and Portuguese who lived and worked in Venice. In some cases the

sopradetto, qual era meco, cognoscendo bene quel portoghese che portava la berretta gialla si misse a ridere dicendo che ce n'erano purassai de simili Portughesi o simili parole".

¹⁵³ Ibid., 293: "Ei dictum che iudicio farebbe esso testimonio de uno apparentemente christiano che desse per moglie a un suo fiolo una hebreia, massimamente se deto fosse portoghese".

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 291: "Quanto fosse così et che fosse la verità, non si potria far bon iudicio cioè che non fosse buon christiano".

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 293: "Io faria iudicio che'l fosse cathivo christiano".

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 295: "Quanto el fusse, io non penseria se non mal me io non ho mai inteso niente de questa cosa".

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 301: "Io ne faria cathivo anzi cathivissimo iuditio in quanto alla fede christiana"; Grendler, "The Tre Savii", 329.

¹⁵⁸ Processi (1579 – 1586), 299: "Se questi [i.e. Portuguese] non fussero mandati per negocii dal re, io li tenerei per Hebrei et che dando per moglie una hebreia a suo figliolo crederei che fosse un vegliacho iudeo".

participants in a trial were mainly Spanish or Portuguese.¹⁵⁹ Transferring to Venice their familiarity with or anxiety over the shadow of crypto-Judaism, Iberian witnesses were suspicious of every sign of deviance, especially in associating with compatriots. In a case of 1597, which finally petered out, the Portuguese Felipe Diez, a cobbler in a shop at the Piazza S. Marco, accused another Portuguese, Antònio Diez, of lapsing into Judaism in Venice. Felipe reported that he had met Antònio in the Spanish town of Alicante and only when he had been convinced that Antònio was an Old Christian they associated more closely. Later, they travelled to Majorca and from there to Genoa. During their trip Felipe still considered Antònio a good Christian and often recited prayers together. In Genoa they separated; Felipe went to Venice and Antònio to Rome. Finally, it was in Venice that Felipe saw Antònio wearing the red hat of a Jew.¹⁶⁰

In 1598, the Spanish ambassador, Domingo de Mendoza reported that having been cautious when he first saw the young Portuguese António Schiaves Rodriguez at his home, he asked his servants about Rodriguez, because they had already known him from Spain. They verified that they knew that Rodriguez was a Christian and a good one. Also Jorge, the ambassador's son, examined his servants about Rodriguez. Spanish witnesses showed that they were aware of a possible discrepancy between someone's external appearance and religious belief and identity. Domingo de Mendoza carefully described Rodriguez as "a Spanish dressed as a Christian". For Spanish in Venice any acquaintance with people from the Iberian Peninsula was often accompanied with distrust about their religious origin.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ See, for instance, the 1575 investigation into the alleged crypto-Jew Felipa Iorge alias Benvainda da Guiar from Portugal, where all witnesses were Portuguese or Spanish: *Processi* (1571 – 1580), 71 – 9.

¹⁶⁰ *Processi* (1587 – 1598), 149: "in Alicanti città et porto di Spagna io ho conosciuto Antonio Diez portoghese, il quale, dicendomi che era christiano vecchio, io praticai seco molto intrinsecamente, andando insieme alla messa. Occorse che se imbarcassimo insieme a Alicanti et andassimo a Maggiorica et poi a Genoa. Et per il viaggio sempre si è mostrato buon christiano et dicessimo spesso insieme le letanie ma, quando fossimo a Genoa, lui andò a Roma et io son venuto a Venetia. Et qui in Venetia io poi ho veduto domenica passata detto Antonio vestito con un capello rosso da ebreo".

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 151: "Et le donne poi dissero a me che costui era christiano et tenuto per molto buono christiano nel paese loro Berganza di Portugalo"; 154: "Et, havendo io interrogato le donne di costui, me resposero che era un huomo da bene, molto buon christiano del suo paese"; 151: "Posson esser da 15 giorni in circa che in casa mia comparve un spagnolo in habito di christiano".

Rumours, Gossip and Crypto-Jewish Identity

Within the testimonies given before the Inquisition, the pieces of evidence ranged from “concrete proof” including facts and general indications of deviance, to hearsay evidence [*fama, e voce publica*]. This latter category constituted an acceptable form of evidence to be seriously considered by the tribunals of the Inquisition.¹⁶² However, in their manuals Inquisition theorists elaborated on the value of hearsay evidence, thus recognising that risks lurked in the use of hearsay. In this view, the *Repertorium Inquisitorium*, written by an anonymous fifteenth-century Inquisitor in Valencia and later published twice (1575 and 1588) in Venice with the commentaries of two Italian jurists, warned that “rumours might provide inadequate (half-full) demonstration of the crimes... the demonstration of rumours is risky and mostly is a false demonstration because rumours may originate from hatred or malevolence and ignorance”.¹⁶³ In the same vein, but also arguing from a technical viewpoint, the Inquisitor Eliseo Masini advised his colleagues that they have to distinguish the witnesses on the grounds of the evidence they provided. He wrote:

There are two sorts of witnesses, those who have seen the crime or have heard it with their proper ears and others who have heard it said; the former are called eyewitnesses and proper ear-witnesses [*Testes de visu, & de auditu proprio*] and the latter indirect ear-witnesses [*Testes de auditu alieno*].¹⁶⁴

In practice it is difficult to establish how successful were the guidelines on the classification of witnesses and the type of evidence they provided. Seldom do Inquisition documents allow us to follow the way Inquisitors worked with evidence. Nevertheless, the 1585 trial against the De Nis family offers a rare insight into the way that the Inquisitor classified and assessed evidence. A trial document that summarised the evidence that witnesses had offered, probably under the Inquisitor’s guidance, registered the various accusations against the family and distinguished each accusation on the basis of either hearsay evidence and rumours, or proper knowledge

¹⁶² In marriage litigations before Venice’s Patriarchal Court, hearsay was decisive too: Ferraro, “The Power to Decide”, 505.

¹⁶³ *Repertorium Inquisitorium*, 337; on the manual, Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 52 – 3, 56.

¹⁶⁴ Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, 39.

by the witness.¹⁶⁵ It seems that Inquisitors even before the guidelines set by their colleague and theorist Masini were aware of how to deal with hearsay evidence, paying attention to its limitation but also seeking to extract the maximum of its potential.

It is often neglected that Inquisition trials are polyphonic documents that contain a range of “voices” that were finally unified in the witness’s testimony. A careful consideration of Inquisition documents reveals different layers of discourse, among them rumours and gossip circulating among ordinary people before reaching the tribunal. Ever since G. Lefebvre’s work on rumours during the early years of the French Revolution, little attention has been paid to the potentials of rumours and gossip as source for historical enquiry.¹⁶⁶ On those occasions, rumours have been examined for periods of political and social turmoil, or in connection with disasters.¹⁶⁷ The role of rumours has been highlighted as a medium for stereotyping the undesirable (witches, vagrants, Jews), the relation of rumours’ circulation as an indication of popular anxiety or resistance against the initiatives of the governing elites.¹⁶⁸ My aim here is to follow another path in the study of rumours; as an indicator of ordinary Venetians’ awareness of crypto-Judaism, attempts to define standards of behaviour, and of wider developments that took place in Venice.¹⁶⁹

The scarcity of sources is a main obstacle in the study of rumours in the social context of past societies. Besides, surviving documents recording rumours have been modified by their authors, mainly officials and rather they reflect the ideology and prejudices of their authors and not of those who spread and circulated those rumours. In this view, the elusive nature of rumours becomes even more vague.

Inquisition documents, however, maintaining a degree of spontaneity, despite being produced within the context of officialdom, allow us to discern the circulation

¹⁶⁵ Processi (1585 – 1589), 170; on other inquisitorial strategies, 72-3, 76-7, 93-4, 152-53, 189-91.

¹⁶⁶ G. Lefebvre, *The Great Fear of 1789. Rural Panic in Revolutionary France*, trans. Joan White (London, 1973).

¹⁶⁷ C. Ramsay, *The Ideology of the Great Fear. The Soissonnais in 1789* (Baltimore and London, 1992); P. Roberts, “Arson, Conspiracy and Rumour in Early Modern Europe”, *Continuity and Change*, 12, 1 (1997): 9 – 29.

¹⁶⁸ C. Gauvard, “Rumeur et stéréotypes à la fin du Moyen Âge”, in *La circulation des nouvelles au Moyen Âge* (Rome and Paris, 1994): 157 – 77; A. A. Yang, “A Conversation of Rumours. The Language of Popular *Mentalités* in Late Nineteenth-Century Colonial India”, *Journal of Social History*, 20, 3 (1987): 485 – 505; C. Wickham, “Gossip and Resistance among the Medieval Peasantry”, *Past and Present*, 160 (1998): 3 – 24.

of rumours relating to the process of cracking down on heretical activity. Paradoxically, whereas other authorities sought to regulate rumours' circulation, the Inquisition paid particular attention in gathering rumours and uncovering any heretical conduct they might have hidden. Even when evidence did not appear in the form of rumours, the Inquisition in Venice often enquired into the public opinion concerning witnesses and defendants, to determine their *buona* or *cattiva fama*, good or ill reputation. It was often the introductory question that focused on rumours: "He was asked if he knows or he has heard it said that in his parish live any heretic or suspect of heresy".¹⁷⁰ Parish priests were often asked to testify about the reputation of witnesses and defendants within their parish or neighbourhood. In cases where the Inquisitor suspected that the defendant concealed the truth and therefore had to undergo torture, rumours about the defendant's ill reputation served as strong indications [*indicia*] for the use of torture.¹⁷¹

An early manifestation of rumours in reports on crypto-Jews came in 1555 from the witness Giulia from the S. Maria Formosa parish. Giving evidence for the investigation into Duarte Gomez and Agostinho Enrichez from the same parish, Giulia reported that it had been said that Gomez and Enrichez, who lived above her apartment, were Marranos and many Jews frequented their house. The rumours about the two alleged Marranos were circulating in the neighbourhood and Giulia told the Inquisition that they could be informed from a mason and some carpenters, who lived there, because "everyone says that they are Marranos".¹⁷²

Some years later, rumours appeared more prominently in the trial against Gaspar Ribiera. Many witnesses were aware of rumours. In 1580, Mattea de Rippasicca, Ribiera's housemaid, testified that after she had left her master's home, she had heard it said in the S. Giovanni e Paolo church that she had been among Marranos, although the witness said that she did not know why people were saying that Ribiera was a Marrano and she did not know what Marrano meant.¹⁷³ Marietta,

¹⁶⁹ For a similar approach: M. Norton, "Gender and Defamation in Seventeenth-Century Maryland", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 44 (1987): 3 – 39.

¹⁷⁰ Processi (1585 – 1589), 79.

¹⁷¹ Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 25-6.

¹⁷² Processi (1548 – 1560), 226: "et se dice che sono marani et ghe pratica in quella casa assai persone et Zudei et femene"; "perchè tutti dicono che sono marani".

¹⁷³ Processi (1579 – 1586), 99: "dappoi che me son partida de là che ho inteso dir in giesia de San Zuane Polo, da non so chi, che me giera da drio Marani cioè che deto Gaspare Ribiera era marano...

another housemaid of Gaspar Ribiera, told the Inquisition: "...I know nothing but many times I have heard it said that Gaspar was a bad Christian. Wherever I went people told me: 'You should not stay there because he is a bad Christian!'"¹⁷⁴ Later, as more witnesses appeared the circulation of rumours became more evident. Matteo, *nunzio* of the parish's Sacrament confraternity said: "He was known not by any other name but Marrano".¹⁷⁵ Similarly, Remego Sopratti, a neighbour from the S. Maria Formosa parish, said: "I have always heard call [Gaspar Ribiera] the Marrano".¹⁷⁶ More soundly, Giulio Balanzan, a Venetian from the S. Barnaba parish, Dorsoduro, who did business with the Ribieras gave a new dimension to the rumours' circulation: "Throughout Venice it was said: Those Marranos have come from Spain".¹⁷⁷

In the eyes of those Venetian witnesses the rumours portrayed the Ribieras as bad Christians, or when rumours referred to the name "Marrano" witnesses showed unawareness of the negative connotations. However, it was witnesses of Spanish or Portuguese origins, who perceived unambiguously the rumours about the Marranism of the Ribieras. Isabel Lobata from Lisbon, who lived in the S. Sofia parish, Cannaregio, testified:

It is certain that the father [Gaspar] and the son [Giovanni] fled Portugal for being Jews and were burned in effigy by the Holy Office [...] I have heard it said many times and by many people, and these are well-known rumours. [...] And if you ask Portuguese persons, who are true Christians, they will say the same with me [...] Christians and Jews speak ill of them [the Ribieras], that they are not Christians and after they die they will go to the paradise below, that is to hell.¹⁷⁸

Io non so a che proposito loro dicessero che detto Gaspare fosse marano né manco quel che volesse dir marano".

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 149: "io non so altro se non che ho inteso dire che l'era cathivo christiano. Io l'ho inteso dir fuora de casa, da più persone in diverse volte ma io non so el nome loro chè, dove io son andata, sapendo che io stava con el dito Gasparo, me dicevano: 'Non doveresti star lì, chè l'è cathivo christiano!'"

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 297: "Po' signor sì, non si conosceva per altro nome che per il marano".

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 302: "L'ho sempre inteso a chiamar il marano".

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 312: "Per tuta Venetia se diceva: 'Quei Marrani', de Gasparo et Ioanne Ribiera, 'sono venuti de Spagna'".

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 401: "Et è cosa certa che il padre et il figliolo erano fuggiti de Portogallo per esser Iudei et brusati in statua del Santo Offitio. [...] L'ho sentito a dir parecchie volte da molte persone et de questo ne è publica voce et fama ma non ve saperia dir in particular da chi. Et, se domandarete Portoghesi che siano veramente Christiani, dirano al medesimo che dico io [...] dixit che Christiani et Iudei dicono

In the same vein, Caim Saruc, a Portuguese Jew from the Venetian Ghetto, was well aware of how to perceive rumours: “Due to well-known rumours [*publica voce e fama*] I hold Gaspar for Marrano. And I do not think that there is a single person in Venice who has met Gaspar and does not regard him a Marrano; ask everyone!”¹⁷⁹

Despite the elusive nature of rumours, certain groups of people can be discerned as agents and transmitters of rumours within the urban fabric of Venice. Surely, servants and housekeepers played a role as rumourmongers. The examples discussed earlier, of the housekeepers from the trial against Gaspar Ribiera in 1580 and the investigation into the family of Tomàs Butierz and Pedro Garzia in 1674 highlighted the role of servants.¹⁸⁰ The testimony of Caterina, a neighbour of the Ribieras, plainly demonstrated the relation between housekeepers and the circulation of rumours:

In their [the Ribieras] house have worked many servants and some of them did not stay there for more than a month; some servants were saying that they [Gaspar and Giovanni] lived in the Christian manner, but some others were saying that they did not live as Christians and they ate meat on Friday and Saturday and those servants were saying that they were Marranos¹⁸¹

Gossip has often been seen as a gendered issue; but as it has been suggested it is the imagery of gossip that it is a gendered fact.¹⁸² In Venice, although men appear to have been less active in parish life, when appeared before courts they were well aware of local events, rumours and gossip.¹⁸³

In witnesses' denunciations and testimonies we can also discern groups that transferred the rumours, thus connecting cases and providing a sort of a cognitive map of the alleged crypto-Jewish presence. Due to Venice's urban geography, by crossing and travelling around the neighbourhoods and parishes of Venice, boatmen

mal di loro, cioè Ioanne et Gasparo, che non erano Christiani et essendo morti sono andati al paradiso di sotto cioè all'inferno”.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 204: “Io ho havuto detto Gaspere per marano per publica voce et fama e ho inteso dire che detto Gaspere è marano [...] non credo che vi sia alcuno in Venetia che habia conosciuto Gaspere che non l'habia per marano, dimandatine tuti!”

¹⁸⁰ See above, 16, 38 – 9.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 97: “In casa de li detti ci sono state più massare et alcune non ci sono state più de un mese, alcune dicevano che facevano vita christiana, alcune disevano di no et che magnavano la carne di venere et di sabbato et queste che dicevano che'l magnava carne, dicevano che'l giera marano”.

¹⁸² Wickham, “Gossip and Resistance”, 15.

¹⁸³ Chojnacka, *Working Women*, 61.

acted as agents in the promulgation of rumours. The prominence of oral exchange in communication made people who travelled across the country on business indispensable for disseminating news and rumours, as shown elsewhere.¹⁸⁴ In Venice in 1570, Baldassare de Valenti, a boatman from the S. Leonardo parish, informed the tribunal that some “Marranos or Jews” lived in a house in the S. Maria Nova parish, Cannaregio, some others in a house in the parish of S. Fosca, Cannaregio, and some others in the Frari area. Thanks to his profession, De Valenti gave to the Inquisition the exact location of each of the suspicious houses and the names of inhabitants, who could help as witnesses, from each parish, among them there were some boatmen too.¹⁸⁵ Some years later, in 1585, the boatmen at the *traghetto* of S. Geremia, Cannaregio, who discussing the recent arrest of the De Nis family, pointed out that the presence of the alleged crypto-Jewish family of Silva from S. Marcilian also required investigation, illustrated further the role of boatmen as intermediaries of rumours.¹⁸⁶

Rumours made a prominent reappearance during the investigation into the De Nis family in 1585. The sewer Giuseppe Mazor told the Inquisition: “I have heard it said that they [the De Nis] are Marranos and they never go to Mass”.¹⁸⁷ Some days later, Antonio Bertolini, the parish priest of S. Leonardo, reported the rumours about the suspect family: “I have heard it said that they are and live as Marranos and they go to the Ghetto, in the Jewish synagogue; I have heard that on Friday they prepare supper for Saturday; I have also heard that they do not keep images of Christ, the Virgin and saints”. Bertolini’s testimony illustrates the emergence, circulation and function of rumours in the parish and the network of mongers and agents. The parish priest informed the Inquisition that the pieces of information had been furnished to him by Domenica, the wife of the boatman Zuane, and the widow Cecilia, who frequented the house of the De Nis as part-time servants. Although Bertolini was not aware of the family’s suspicious behaviour, the reception of rumours alarmed him and made him more careful; he testified that due to the rumours he had noticed that

¹⁸⁴ A. Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, *The Historical Journal*, 40, 3 (1997): 602 – 8.

¹⁸⁵ Processi (1561 – 1570), 133: “una casa nella quale habita Marani overo Zudei [...] Et si ritrova un’altra case de simili Marani over Hebrei in la parochia di Santa Fosca in corte ca’Barbaro per mezzo il pozzo. Et un’altra ai Frari in cale del Favro la prima porta in man sinistra”.

¹⁸⁶ See above, 36; on the Silva case, 30 – 1, 36 – 8.

the suspicious persons had never gone to church. Finally, he added his own version of how the suspicious persons might have behaved: "...and I suspect that I have never seen them associate with Christians".¹⁸⁸

Cecilia's testimony similarly highlights how rumours made their recipients more aware and moved them to scrutinise suspicious behaviour; she reported: "...because I have heard it said that they were Marranos, I had in mind to pay attention when the bells sounded for the Ave Maria; and I have noticed that they never genuflected, took off their hats, or recited the Ave Maria. And I have noticed this many times".¹⁸⁹ Cecilia was herself a recipient of earlier gossip about the De Nis from a former servant, a young man from Udine. Within the network of rumours Cecilia operated both as monger and transmitter. She received gossip from the young servant and others; subsequently she moved from a passive approach to rumours to an active one: she sought to confirm the rumours and to refine them. Later she passed the rumours to the parish priest.

More neighbours, apart from those who appeared before the Inquisition, were apparently aware of the rumours circulating, as Cecilia reported: "Those in the neighbourhood think that the family do not observe a good Law". Similarly, another witness, Domenica said: "and the whole neighbourhood says that in their [the De Nis] house there is no image of any sort". At the time that the accusations against the De Nis were brought before the Inquisition, the rumours about the family's suspicious conduct had already enforced specific perceptions and crystallised into a specific understanding among witnesses. This is substantiated by Domenica's testimony. She reported that the family never gave alms and fire to the neighbours on Friday and Saturday. Asked why the family did not do so, Domenica replied roundly: "How can I know? People are saying that they live as Jews".¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Processi (1585 – 1589), 79: "et ho inteso rezonare che questi son Marani et che non vano alla messa".

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 80: "Et ho inteso dire che sono et vivono da Marani et che vano in gheto alla sinagoga de li Hebrei et ho inteso ancora che i parechiano el venere per il sabbato. Io ho ancora inteso che i non ha figure né di Christo né de la Madona né dei santi in casa"; "e in soma è una gran cosa che mai gli ho visti in chiesa"; "et ho dato fantasia che mai gli ho visti praticar con Christiani".

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 81: "perchè io haveva inteso dir che erano Marani dava a mente quando sonava l'Ave Maria, né mai ghe ho visto né inzenochiarse né cavar se la beretta né dir l'Ave Maria. Et a questo ci ho advertito più volte".

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 83: "Caro signor, ...et per la contrada se dice che in casa loro non ci è imagine de sorte nissuna"; "ma el venere et il sabbato non ghe ho mai visto dar elemosine nè vuoleno dar fuoco."

A consideration of the rumours' circulation in the cases of Gaspar Ribiera and the De Nis family, allows us to assess the changing patterns of crypto-Jewish perceptions in those few years that separated the two trials. By 1581 when the Inquisition stopped calling witnesses to give evidence on Ribiera, the patterns of rumours about the defendant are apparent. The rumours that portrayed Ribiera as a Marrano circulated in the S. Maria Formosa parish, the Ribieras' place of residence, but also outside it, in other areas of Venice, such as the Rialto, where the Ribieras did business, or in places, where people who knew the Ribieras lived. This wide circulation of rumours about the Ribieras might have been because the family had lived in two other parishes before staying in the S. Maria Formosa parish. Although they were widely circulating, the rumours surfaced only when the Inquisition started interrogating witnesses about them. By that time, rumours remained of secondary importance for those who were aware of them, and in a dormant state. The multiple and fragmentary perceptions of the rumours might have contributed to their subordination when people in their everyday activities referred to or associated with the Ribieras.

In the De Nis case, in contrast, the diffusion of rumours was almost exclusively structured around the parish of S. Leonardo and hardly transferred outside it. Rumours had become a matter of locality. In these rumours, Marranism was unambiguously referred to crypto-Judaism. Due to this explicit reference, the rumours encouraged neighbours to adopt an openly hostile attitude towards members of the suspect family. The witness Cecilia reported: "Those in the neighbourhood think that the family do not observe a good Law, because they never go to Mass; and every time the servant of the family is going to bring water, they [neighbours] tell him: "Hey, you Jew!"¹⁹¹ In her turn, the witness Domenica reported another incident; some neighbours, when they saw the family's servant at the time the Ave Maria was rung, asked him to cross himself and recite the Ave Maria; and the servant responded: "What cross? I do not understand". Domenica concluded: "So, the servant did not want to cross himself or to say the Ave Maria because, as far as I have heard

Interrogata per che cose non voleno dar fuoco el venere et il sabbato, respondit: Che sogio mi? Le persone dicono che devono far la vita hebrea".

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 81: "Et quelli de la contrada non hano questi Philippi che siano da bona Legge perchè non vano mai a messa e el servitor che hano in casa quando che'l vien a trazer dell'aqua li dicono: 'Ha, hebreo!'"

it said, the family are Jews who became Christians”.¹⁹² The emergence and diffusion of rumours about the De Nis contributed to a process of gradual exclusion; Bertolini, the parish priest, told the Inquisition that he had warned the two women, who had informed him about the family and spread rumours, to stop frequenting the De Nis’ home.¹⁹³ It has been suggested that after the mid-1560s, Venice’s popular classes had grown less tolerant.¹⁹⁴ In this view, in the few years that separated the trials of Ribiera and De Nis, this trend developed, which turned rumours about the De Nis into a common definition.¹⁹⁵

Finally, while in the Ribieras’ case, the rumours were horizontally scattered throughout different areas of Venice, in the De Nis’ case, the diffusion of rumours developed hierarchically before reaching the Inquisition’s ears. Rumours emerged among the ordinary people of the S. Leonardo parish. As anxiety intensified, in an act of legitimisation, parishioners passed the rumours to the parish priest, who represented the appropriate authority in matters of heretical misconduct. Eventually, it was the parish priest, who undertook to assess, summarise and report the rumours, the people’s opinion, to the supreme authority, the Inquisition.

The trial against the De Nis family is emblematic from various viewpoints.¹⁹⁶ Compared to earlier hearings and trials, this case was exclusively parish-based, thus exemplifying the significant role of the parochial system envisaged by Catholic reformers in the Council of Trent more than thirty years earlier.¹⁹⁷ Although the notion of parochial life is useful for analysis, when it actually comes to a specific context certain difficulties might arise. For Venice, questions do arise about the contemporaries’ perceptions of terms such as *parochia*, *contra*, *contrada*; for instance, what were the perceptions of neighbourhoods’ geographical relation to official parishes, how much neighbourhoods overlapped the boundaries of parishes

¹⁹² Ibid., 82: “le visine hano messo a mente a questo et al suo servitor predetto che quando sonava l’Ave Maria li ghe diseava che’l se facesse el segno de la croce et che dicesse l’Ave Maria et lui rispondeva: ‘Che croce?’ Dicendo: ‘Io non intendo’. Et così non se voleva far el segno de la croce né dirla et, per quanto ho inteso a dir, i sé Hebrei fatti Cristiani”.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 80: “alli quale io gli ho proibito che non ci praticano”.

¹⁹⁴ Martin, *Venice’s Hidden Enemies*, 194.

¹⁹⁵ T. Shibutani, *Improvised News. A Sociological Study of Rumour* (Indianapolis, 1966), 14 – 6.

¹⁹⁶ See also, 103 – 118, 119, 122.

¹⁹⁷ C. F. Black, *Early Modern Italy. A Social History* (London and New York, 2001), 167 – 87, esp. 167 – 69.

and defined loyalties, or the boundaries of parishes blurred, or centrality prevailed over the locality of neighbourhoods and parishes.¹⁹⁸ However, over the sixteenth century and especially after the 1560s small-scale localities, with parishes being the most important certainly became more significant in every-day social life. From the authorities' viewpoint, both the Church and the State, parishes' role was reinforced by measures such as recording the *status animarum* (collecting data on people within the parish boundaries), the definition of parish boundaries, according to the Tridentine decree,¹⁹⁹ and the selection of a "parish chief", thus functioning as an administrative unit for the government and the Church. Besides, Venetians regularly identified themselves and the others by their parishes when appearing before tribunals, with the Inquisition being a typical example. Although parishes were more significant, as they bore official recognition, they were just among other small-scale urban localities, such as neighbourhoods, courtyards, etc. that gradually obtained importance and became meaningful and cohesive units for their inhabitants.

The trial against the De Nis family is also important because it reached the Inquisition when the patterns of heretical activity in the city changed; trials of witchcraft and magic practices prevailed over "Lutheranism", which characterised the previous thirty years, as statistics clearly suggest. For the Venetian tribunal the 1580s were its busiest period.²⁰⁰ However, less clear were the reasons that engendered this shift in inquisitorial activity. Already from its initial stages, the various manifestations of the Reformation had inevitably a public face. Supporters of the Reformation propagated their ideas and beliefs seeking to proselytise others. Apart from evangelical preachers who used the pulpit, discussions and propaganda took place in places of public use, such as workshops, shops, inns and taverns.²⁰¹ As oppression grew harsher the members of the Venetian evangelical community, who

¹⁹⁸ D. Romano, *Patricians and Popolani. The Social Foundations of the Venetian Renaissance State* (Baltimore and London, 1987), 141 – 58; Muir, "The Virgin on the Street", 286 – 87; many of the questions relating to Venetian parishes and neighbourhoods, though for an earlier period, are highlighted in J. Wheeler, "Neighbourhoods and Local Loyalties in Renaissance Venice", in Cowan, *Mediterranean Urban Culture*, 31 – 42.

¹⁹⁹ *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. H. J. Schroeder (Rockford, Ill., 1978), ch. 13, 203 – 4.

²⁰⁰ Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 92, 105; Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, Appendix figures 1, 2.

²⁰¹ Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, 87, 89, 90, 210 – 14, 227; S. Seidel Menchi, "Inquisizione come repressione o inquisizione come mediazione? Una proposta di periodizzazione", *Annuario dell'istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea*, 35 – 6 (1983 – 4): 56 – 61.

remained in the city moved to dissimulation conforming to Catholicism outwardly.²⁰² In this view, “Lutheranism’s” public face gradually waned. On the other hand, the emergence of trials against what can loosely be described as witchcraft is clearly related with the environment in parishes and neighbourhoods. As it has been noted the “typical” Venetian *strega* was a woman who stood out from her neighbours.²⁰³ Therefore, in this view, the parish-bound trial against the De Nis family for crypto-Judaism, although a minor crime from a statistical viewpoint, illustrates this emerging new trend of parish and neighbourhood-based perceptions of misbehaviour.

The De Nis case can be further noted with reference to the general pattern of crypto-Jewish perceptions. Following the cases from Duarte Gomez and Agostinho Enrichez through the Ribieras to the De Nis, Venetian witnesses seem gradually more sensitive of crypto-Jewish identity, and they appeared more often as accusers and witnesses before the Inquisition. Also, the perceptions of the geographical distribution of crypto-Judaism gradually shifted. From areas such as S. Maria Formosa, S. Maria Nova, or the Frari areas, later cases have moved to the outmost areas of Venice, at Cannaregio, and especially in parishes such as S. Marcuola, S. Leonardo, or S. Geremia, which were close to the Ghetto areas. This trend continued also into the seventeenth century.²⁰⁴ This change in the perceptions of crypto-Jews’ residence might have resulted from an actual presence of crypto-Jews in these areas, as their proximity to the Ghettos facilitated contacts with the Jewish community. For instance, Felipe de Nis denied having ever entered the Ghetto but confessed that he got circumcised by a Jewish doctor.²⁰⁵ Additionally, the transient nature of those areas, where many immigrants resided, may have attracted crypto-Jews, who sought to maintain a low profile during their sojourn in Venice.

Moreover, from the 1570s, crypto-Jews were increasingly identified as merchants. In the 1570 investigation into a household of Marranos from the Frari

²⁰² Martin, *Venice’s Hidden Enemies*, 125 – 28.

²⁰³ Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 236 – 38, 243.

²⁰⁴ Duarte Gomez and Agostinho Enrichez from S. Maria Formosa (Castello): Processi (1548 – 1560); the anonymous Marrano household from S. Maria Nova (Cannaregio, on the borders with Castello), S. Fosca (Cannaregio), and Frari (S. Polo): Processi (1561 – 1570); the Ribieras from S. Maria Formosa: Processi (1579 – 1586); the De Nis from S. Leonardo (Cannaregio): Processi (1585 – 1589); the Silva family from S. Marcilian (Cannaregio): Processi (1585 – 1589); Jorge Francisco and Fernando Diaz from S. Marcuola (Cannaregio): Processi (1608 – 1632); Violante Ramira from S. Marcuola: Processi (1642 – 1681); Tomàs Butierz and Pedro Garzia from S. Geremia (Cannaregio): Processi (1642 – 1681).

²⁰⁵ Processi (1585 – 1589), 136.

area, one witness believed that they were merchants of precious stones and another one said that he had heard that they were merchants of wool.²⁰⁶ Later, almost all witnesses identified the De Nis as merchants.²⁰⁷ Similarly, in 1621, the Diaz brothers were known as merchants.²⁰⁸ Antonio, Violante Ramira's husband, was recognised as a merchant too. Last but not least, in most cases from the late sixteenth century onwards, witnesses did not miss the chance to point out that the suspected households employed servants.²⁰⁹

This change in perceptions of crypto-Judaism surely reflects an increasing awareness and anxiety about Judaism among the Christian residents in the outmost Cannaregio parishes, probably due to the proximity to the Ghetto. Moreover, the image of the crypto-Jewish merchant might have reflected not only ordinary people's anxiety about any deviant behaviour but also an alertness to class and status differentiation of some newcomers, who due to their profession and lifestyle stood out in the overwhelmingly working-class area of Cannaregio.²¹⁰

Finally, on the basis of surviving records, as the lacunae for the years 1593 – 1615 (apart from 1610) do not allow assessment, the De Nis case was the last full-dress trial involving Iberian Judaizers to be conducted by the Venetian Inquisition. The later trial against the Diaz family was never fully pursued, as the Venetian government intervened,²¹¹ and the investigation into Tomàs Butierz and Pedro Garzia was finally dropped. Although no direct evidence substantiates it, it would be plausible to suggest that from the late sixteenth century onwards the presence of Jews, mainly of Iberian origin regardless of whether appearing as Levantine Jews, who took the risk of living outside the Ghettos in the guise of Christians, waned.²¹² This might have been the result of the charter of 1589 that the Venetian state issued for Levantine Jewish merchants and also included the Ponentine (Western) Jews, who were not Ottoman subjects. According to the charter, the Jewish merchants

²⁰⁶ Processi (1561 – 1570), 134 – 35.

²⁰⁷ Processi (1585 – 1589), 81, 82, 85.

²⁰⁸ Processi (1608 – 1632), 59, 64.

²⁰⁹ The anonymous Marrano household from the Frari area in 1570; the De Nis family in 1585; the Silva family in 1585; Ramira Violante in 1642; Jorge Francisco and Fernando Diaz in 1621; Tomàs Butierz and Pedro Garzia in 1674.

²¹⁰ P. Braunstein, "Cannaregio, zona di transito?", in *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri. XIV – XVIII secolo*, ed. D. Calabi and P. Lanaro (Rome, 1998), 52 – 62.

²¹¹ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 194.

²¹² For instance in the years 1633 – 1637, accusations were overwhelmingly against Italian neophytes: Processi (1633 – 1637).

could reside with their families in Venice for ten years and trade freely, secured from persecution for religious reasons – past religious conduct.²¹³ In this view, the charter made it more possible for Iberian Jews to opt for living in the Ghettos.²¹⁴

Assuming that Tristao Costa's and the Filipe de Nis' claims, in 1555 and 1585 respectively, were true, according to which they had adopted the guise of a Christian only for their business transactions, whereas they had always lived as Jews,²¹⁵ it would be plausible to suggest that the charter of 1589 and the commercial privileges that granted to Levantine and Ponentine Jews, removed many obstacles relating to commerce that made Iberian Jews stay outside the Ghettos. This new situation created after the charter of 1589, which was issued mainly for economic considerations, might have been reflected in the words of the Doge Leonardo Donà, twenty years later:

it is better they dwell as Jews in the Ghetto and wear the yellow hat, than that they dwell among Christians in a black one, frequenting the churches and sacraments in a spirit of falsehood, bringing dishonour to God and scandal to the city.²¹⁶

Turning to crypto-Judaism, particularly that of Iberian origin (Marranism), from the Christian witnesses' viewpoint it remained a preoccupation of secondary importance. This is substantiated by statistics and the witnesses' vague identification. Instead, it was the Italian Jews' conversion to Christianity and the fear that those conversions were not sincere that more profoundly shaped the Jewish-Christian relations. It was the friar Girolamo Bonetti from Reggio, who said that travelling from Ferrara to Venice he discussed with other travellers that "the Jews were perfidious people, particularly as many of them made the holy baptism a trade".²¹⁷

Spanning a period of more than a century, two works that were published in a pamphlet form, in all likelihood in Venice, are indicative of the matters that counted

²¹³ The charter is discussed in detail in B. Ravid, "The First Charter of the Jewish Merchants of Venice, 1589", *Association for Jewish Studies Review*, 1 (1976): 187 – 222. For a recent treatment, idem, "Venice, Rome and the Reversion of New Christians to Judaism: A Study in *Ragione di Stato*", in Ioly Zorattini, *L'identità dissimulata*, 151 – 93. For the subsequent charters, B. Ravid, "An Introduction to the Charters of the Jewish Merchants of Venice", in *Studies on the Jews*, 203 – 46.

²¹⁴ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 194; although the Ghetto Novissimo was established in 1633, it was supposed that the Venetian government sought to accommodate in the Ghettos thirty Jewish families from France and seventy families of Marranos in 1604: Processi, *Appendici*, 354.

²¹⁵ Processi (1548 – 1560), 254, 258; Processi (1585 – 1589), 88 – 9, 94 – 5.

²¹⁶ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 189.

²¹⁷ Processi (1633 – 1637), 181.

more for Venetians' perceptions and preoccupations. Annotated by Giovanni Gregorio Cremonese, and probably published in 1575 or a little later, circulated in reprint, an anonymous pamphlet that treated the supposed birth of Siamese twins to a Jewish mother in the Venetian Ghetto. According to the anonymous author, the monstrous birth indicated that a great event was about to come. After analysing various signs, the author predicted the future ruin of the Jews, estimated in 1580. The pamphlet urged the Jews that their only salvation from the ruin lay in their conversion.²¹⁸

Published in 1681, an anonymous pamphlet narrated the story of the Jew Jacob Pessa, who lived in the house of Maria Donato Emo in the S. Leonardo parish in Venice. The event supposedly took place in 1681. Visions motivated Pessa to reveal to Emo that he wanted to become a Christian. Indeed, he was catechised and finally baptised. But after a while Pessa fled Emo's home stealing her jewels and leaving her a note: "do not trust any Jew who says that he wants to become Christian, because even if he says so, in their heart they are more Jews than ever".²¹⁹

²¹⁸ *Discorso sopra gli accidenti del parto mostruoso nato di una Hebrea in Venetia nell'anno 1575 a di XXVI di Maggio, Dove si ragiona altamente del futuro destino de gli Hebrei*, [N.p. (Venice ?), 1575 (?)], 6v: "Cosi hai gia sprezzato li segni, che ti accedero quando havevi principato, ne sei ricorda a Dio tuo con penitentia a placar la sua ira; ne dopoi ha havuto il tempo, perche li pericoli tosto ti sovennero. Hierusalem, Hierusalem convertete ad Dominum Deum tuum. Qui faccio fine desiderando la salute di questo popolo". I have consulted the copy BNM, Misc. 0268. 014; the pamphlet is briefly discussed in R. Calimani, *The Ghetto of Venice*, trans. K. Silberblatt Wolfthal (Milan, 1988), 88 – 9.

²¹⁹ *Nova e vera Relatione successa novamente nella Inclita Città di Venetia d'un perfido Hebreo per nome Jacob Pessa, che con finta di farsi Christiano a fatto diversi ladronecci, et altre sceleratezze* (Venice, 1681), 2r: "e non la creda a nessuno Hebreo, che dica farsi Christiano, perche i lo dice con la bocca, ma co'l cuore sono più Hebrei, che mai". I have consulted the copy BNM, Misc. 0169.081.

Crypto – Judaism before the Inquisition: Inquisitorial Discourse and Practice, and Strategies of Defence

This chapter describes and analyses the encounters between the Inquisition and those suspected of crypto-Judaism, focusing mainly on individuals or families of Spanish or Portuguese origin (Marranos). Mapping out the inquisitorial discourse will highlight its formation, the criteria used for identifying misconduct, the classification of offences, the strategies of exclusion, and the patterns of convergence and divergence from the tactics employed by the defendants. From the early encounters in the late 1540s and 1550s until the late sixteenth century the articulation of the Inquisition's discourse on Iberian Jews and crypto-Jews was in a process of formation, with papal policy and the Venetian state's approach contributing to its gradual standardisation.

The unequal relation between authority, represented by the Inquisitor, and the accused person who sought to avoid punishment determined the inquisitorial discourse and practice. In their testimonies, accused persons put forward various arguments to justify their position and to save themselves.¹ In this context of unequal power relation and officialdom, the defendants' arguments were often part of defence tactics; they were not necessarily sincere and objective accounts. Also pieces of information from testimonies cast some doubt on the objectivity of defendants' accounts and show that they were a tactical argumentation, which occasionally convinced the tribunal.²

¹ On defendants' strategies see also, 162, 164 – 69, 195 – 215.

² See the testimony of the servant Luna from the trial against the De Nis family, who initially convinced the tribunal of her Jewishness and only the interrogations of other defendants revealed her identity, 103 – 4, 116.

In 1580, the wife of the accused Alvise Capuano testified that her husband had openly argued for specific strategies:

He wanted to instruct all those who would be arrested by the most holy Inquisition, how to get out soon, and when I asked him the way, he said that they confess everything that they will be told, and immediately they will be released (...) [He told that] the man who finds himself imprisoned by the forces of justice and especially if his life is in danger, should know well how to pretend and simulate in order to save himself, and later as he is out of prison he believes and does whatever he likes.³

In 1595, Don Evagrio of the Order of S. Giorgio in Alga told the Venetian Inquisition that Ottavio Longo, with whom he had been in prison in Padua, had told him that in Vicenza he had offered to denounce twenty-four “Lutherans” to the Inquisition in order to save himself, but as he had not been able to find so many, he decided to change the accusation and denounced Tommaso Campanella and Giovanni Battista Clario for having written a Dialogue between Christ, Moses and Mohammed, according to which they were three impostors who went around deceiving people.⁴

Some individuals, accused of crypto-Judaism, successfully dissimulated and persuaded the Inquisition with their depositions, but evidence of their subsequent conduct suggests that their testimonies were not at all sincere accounts. For instance, Abraam Righetto, who had earlier been put on a lengthy trial (1570-3) by the Venetian Inquisition,⁵ when facing the Inquisition in Lisbon, in March 1580, gave an account of Portuguese New Christians who lived in Italy, especially in Ferrara, as

³ Translation mine. Quoted in N. Davidson, “The Inquisition in Venice and Its Documents: Some Problems of Method and Analysis”, in Del Col and Paolin, *L’Inquisizione romana in Italia nell’età moderna*, 128: “Voleva insegnar a uscir presto tutti quelli che saranno incarcerati per la santissima Inquisitione, et essendoli dimandato a che modo, egli rispose che confessino tutto quello che gli sarà opposto, che subito saranno relassati (...). L’homo che si ritrova carcerato nelle forze della giustitia, massime con pericolo della vita, bisogna che sapi ben fingere et simulare per uscir di esse forze, ma poi essendo fuori di carcere poteva credere et fare quello che li piaceva, et pareva”.

⁴ ACPV, CSI, b. 3 (1586 – 1599), 145v. That time Ottavio Longo from Barletta was on trial with Tommaso Campanella and Gio: Battista Clario in Rome. The Cardinal of S. Severina had asked the Inquisitor of Padua to examine witnesses on Longo. In his turn, the Inquisitor of Padua informed his Venetian colleague to examine Evagrio who was then in Venice, condemned at the oars; on the trial in Rome, L. Firpo, “Tommaso Campanella”, “Giovanni Battista Clario”, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 61 vols. (Rome, 1960 -), 17: 376, 26:139.

⁵ See below 89 – 102, 119.

Jews.⁶ Among them there was Duarte Gomez alias David Zaboca, business agent of Beatriz de Luna, who with his business partner Agostinho Enrichez, in 1555 had succeeded in saving themselves before the Venetian Inquisition by proving that they lived as Christians.⁷ Even more indicative of those tactical depositions was the story that Abraam Righetto told the Inquisitor in Lisbon about himself. Immediately, at the first interrogation Righetto admitted that he had been born in Lisbon and collaborated with the Inquisition by confessing that he had been a Judaizer.⁸ Righetto was punished with formal abjuration and life imprisonment, but later, due to health problems, his sentence was modified to home confinement. However, some years earlier, in the Venetian Inquisition, Righetto had persistently denied that he had been born in Portugal and insisted that he had been born in Ferrara.⁹

Early Encounters

In 1549, Pietro Paolo from Casale Monferrato brought accusations against Francisco Olivier. The accusation concerned his ambiguous relations with Christianity and Judaism. Olivier had been injured in a courtesan's home in the S. Stefano area. There, he had asked to confess. Later Olivier was transferred to the house of his later denunciator. From there he ended up in an inn in the Ghetto. After having recovered, Olivier was seen with the Jewish yellow hat, although before his wounding he wore a black hat and bore arms as a Christian.¹⁰

Olivier moved between Christianity and Judaism. Members of his family lived as Jews; his brother David was described by a witness as a Jewish merchant, who travelled between Ferrara, Venice and Ancona. Olivier said that his relative Jorge Odorigo had departed for the Levant where he changed his name to Salomon Pentho. Olivier seems to have been one of those New Christians who maintained

⁶ Righetto's trial in Lisbon is published in *Processi* (1570 – 1572), *Appendice documentaria*, 219 – 286: 271, 277.

⁷ See 3, 5, 25, 49, 63, 70, 75, 83 – 89.

⁸ *Processi* (1570 – 1572), 242.

⁹ See 19, 22, 89 – 102, 119.

¹⁰ *Processi* (1548 – 1560), 77 – 80.

relations with Jewish family members and in times of hardship turned to them for support.¹¹

It is difficult to ascertain Olivier's religious identity, but he seems to have been more inclined towards Christianity. Before the tribunal he sought to convince the Inquisitor that a distinction existed between someone's association with Jews, especially relatives in the Ghetto, and observance of Jewish customs. Justifying his behaviour, he claimed:

It is true that I have eaten with the Jews, because they are relatives of mine, but I have not observed their rites; this happened because even when the Jews have Christians to dinner and the Christians eat with them they do not follow the Jews' customs.¹²

After the accusation, the Holy Office immediately started an investigation and arrested the accused. On Tuesday 23 July 1549, the sub-deacon in the S. Angelo church, Antonio de Bernardi, who was supposed to have confessed the accused, was called to testify. On the same day, the tribunal also examined Vittorio da Pesaro, whom the denunciator had cited as witness. Both witnesses were examined on the events that took place before and after Olivier's wounding and on their relation with the accused. The cleric was examined on whether he recognised Olivier as a foreigner judging from his accent. The tribunal asked the witnesses to confirm whether Olivier was a Christian or Jew. The Inquisitor followed two different paths in formulating his question on Olivier's identity. The cleric was asked whether he had recognised Olivier as a Christian and additionally whether he had confessed him as a proper Christian, whereas Vittorio da Pesaro was asked whether Olivier was a Jew. Later, as more witnesses were called to testify, the formation of the question changed to a more balanced and neutral form: "He was asked if the said Francisco is Christian or Jew?"¹³

On the same day, the first interrogation of Francisco Olivier took place. It is not clear whether Olivier was examined before or after the witnesses mentioned

¹¹ Ibid., 83, 85; Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 223 – 24.

¹² Processi (1548 –1560), 85: "L'è ben vero che ho mangiato cum Hebrei, per esser mei parenti, ma perhò non ho ateso alli sui riti, l'è perché etiam qualche volta li Hebrei facino banchetti alli Christiani et loro mangiano, ma però non fano a riti de Hebrei".

¹³ Ibid., 80, 81, 88: "Domandato se per quel che lui polse comprender gli parse che'l ditto ferito fosse christiano,"; "Domandato se lui sa che'l dito Francesco sia zudeo over non,"; "Domandato se'l detto Francesco è hebreo over christiano".

above. During the interrogation were present the Inquisitor, Marino Veneto, and the papal nuncio's fiscal, Alessandro Ruggiero. Olivier was transferred to the tribunal from the prison of the magistracy of the *Signori di Notte al Criminal*.¹⁴ The Inquisition's notary took notes of Olivier's physical description. The interrogation opened with the standard question whether the accused was aware of the reason for his imprisonment. Then the Inquisitor sought to establish the sequence of events: how and where Olivier got injured and if he had asked to confess. After those initial questions, the Inquisitor examined Olivier over his religious identity, asking him directly whether he was a Christian or Jew. Olivier answered ambiguously: "I am a Christian. It is true that I am circumcised and my father got me circumcised and I do not remember when I got circumcised or received baptism but I have always been a good Christian".¹⁵

The Inquisitor pointed out Olivier's contradiction of being a Christian but living in the Jewish way in the Ghetto and wearing the yellow headgear. The adoption of yellow headgear and the presence in the Ghetto constituted evidence of Jewish identity. To Olivier's insistence that he had never worn the yellow headgear and lived in the Jewish manner, the Inquisitor changed the question omitting the conclusions of his earlier question: "He was asked why he stayed in the Ghetto with the Jews and lived with them".¹⁶ The accused was then willing to reply. He explained that because he had no money, he moved to the Ghetto, where he had many Jewish relatives, who paid for the inn where he stayed. Towards the end of the interrogation, Olivier again took the initiative to stress the distinction he had earlier made, that residence in the Ghetto did not necessarily mean practice of Judaism: "If you ever find that I wore the yellow hat, or I lived in the Jewish manner, or I ate and drank according to the Jewish customs I will submit myself to every punishment".¹⁷

¹⁴ On the Inquisition's prisons, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 135 – 6,

¹⁵ Processi (1548 – 1560), 84: "Io son christiano. L'è ben vero che io son circumciso et mio padre mi ha circumciso et non me ricordo quando sia stato circumciso nè baptezato et son sempre vivesto da bon christiano".

¹⁶ Ibid., 84: "Domandato per che causa essendo lui costituito come dice christiano, l'ha vivutto alla hebraica in getto et ha portato la beretta zala, respose: Mai non se troverà la verità che io habbia visuto alla hebreia, nè mancho ho portato mai la beretta zala. Domandato perchè habitava in ghetto cum li Hebrei et viveva cum loro".

¹⁷ Ibid., 85: "Dicens ex se: Se mai se troverà ch'io habbia portato beretta zala, nè mancho vivuto a modo hebreo, nè mangiato over bevuto secondo li riti hebrei, me sottometto a ogni pena".

The proceedings restarted on Saturday 27 July. At this time the tribunal initiated investigations on its own by calling for interrogation three Christians, two of them porters in the Ghetto; none of the earlier witnesses had offered those names as a possible source of information. The Inquisitor directly asked the three witnesses about their acquaintance with Olivier and subsequently he sought to extract information about Olivier's conduct before and after his injury and transfer to the Ghetto, focusing on the way Olivier was dressed. As the witnesses responded that they had seen him at least once with a yellow headgear, the Inquisitor sought a final confirmation on Olivier's religious identity, by inquiring into the public opinion about Olivier in the Ghetto: "He was asked if the said Francisco was regarded as a Jew or Christian in the Ghetto and if his behaviour was Jewish or Christian".¹⁸ On Wednesday 31 July, the tribunal called Giacomo, another Christian porter in the Ghetto. The Inquisitor focused on the colour of the headgear as indicative of religious identity. Initially, he asked whether Olivier was a Christian or Jew. As the witness said that he could not answer, the Inquisitor re-formulated his question bringing into attention the issue of the headgear: "He was asked if when he first met this Francisco, [he] wore yellow or black headgear".¹⁹

The particular attention that the Inquisitor paid to the colour of the headgear was highlighted during the interrogations on 27 and 31 July. The Inquisitor followed two lines of examination. In the first session (27 July), the question on Olivier's clothing was posed before the question on the witness's awareness of whether Olivier was a Christian or Jew. In the second session (31 July), the question on the headgear came after the witness's ignorance of Olivier's identity had been revealed. In both sessions, by examining the colour of the headgear, the Inquisitor obtained a minimum proof of Olivier's guilt. In the first session, after having established the fact of the yellow headgear, the Inquisitor sought to extract additional information by posing a more general question. The attempt was successful, as the witness added: "Olivier behaved mostly as a Jew rather than as a Christian, since he stayed in the Jewish inn". In the second session, as the witness failed to give an overall answer that could

¹⁸ Ibid., 86: "Domandato se esso testimonio ha veduto esso Olivier andar fora di casa per getto over per Venetia dapoi che è stato ferito et come, cioè in che habito l'ha visto,"; "Dimandato se esso Oliviero veniva tenuto per hebreo overo per christiano in ghetto et si lui faceva a l'hebrea over alla christiana".

later lead to a particular piece of evidence, the Inquisitor sought just to establish a minimum proof, that of the colour of the headgear.

On 1 August 1549, Francisco Olivier appeared before the tribunal for a second time. The Inquisitor urged him to tell the truth about his religious identity. As Olivier maintained that he was Christian, the Inquisitor continued to ask for clarification on his relations with Jews: "He was asked if he is a Christian why did he associate with Jews and live with them".²⁰ On 2 August, a new set of interrogations began. At this time the tribunal conducted the interrogations in the Ghetto and examined two Jews and a Christian. Two witnesses, the Jew Salomon and Giovanni Francesco di Brandi said that they were not sure whether Olivier was a Christian or Jew. A third witness, the Jew Bondi di Vitali, who ran an inn in the Ghetto, confirmed what the Inquisitor sought throughout the examination of previous witnesses and the accused. Bondi positively said that he had registered Olivier in the book of Jewish foreigners under the Jewish name Ioseph and having recognised him as a Jew he had offered him accommodation and food "in the Jewish way".

Finally, on 8 August, the tribunal called the accused and pronounced the sentence. Olivier was sentenced to the galleys for four years and perpetual banishment from the Republic's lands. The tribunal also made provisions in case Olivier escaped the galleys or violated the banishment. Olivier was to be whipped publicly in the Piazza S. Marco before his return to the galleys.

In the proclamation of the sentence, the Inquisition explained the grounds on which Olivier was found guilty. The tribunal's reasoning was that although he was a Jew, he had sexual relations with a Christian prostitute, asked to be confessed as a Christian and later presented himself as a professing Jew by changing his name to Ioseph and wearing a yellow hat. Olivier's behaviour was judged as derisive towards the Christian faith.²¹

The sentence passed on Olivier reflects how the tribunal conducted the interrogations, consulted the witnesses, surveyed evidence and classified religious

¹⁹ Ibid., 88: "Domandato se'l detto Francesco è hebreo over christiano, respose: Mi non vel scio dir. Domandato se quando lui lo comenzò a conoscer esso Francesco era cum baretta zala over negra".

²⁰ Ibid., 89: "Adimandato si esso costituito è christiano, per che causa esso costituito pratica con li Hebrei et vive con loro".

²¹ Ibid., 90; almost twenty years later, in 1567, it was stipulated from Rome that Jews having relations with Christian prostitutes, should be punished with ten years in the galleys, N. S. Davidson, "Rome and the Venetian Inquisition", 21.

offence and identity. The tribunal refused to accept Olivier's claims that he had been baptised and lived as a Christian. From the initial sessions, the Inquisitor sought to confirm Olivier's adherence to Judaism. During the interrogations several witnesses expressed doubts whether Olivier was a Christian or Jew. Already on the first day of depositions (23 July) the witness Vittorio da Pesaro gave evidence for Olivier's religious identity. Vittorio said: "I know him only as one of those Marranos from Portugal".²² Other witnesses pointed out Olivier's origin; the cleric Antonio de Bernardi testified that he had heard that Olivier was Spanish, and Di Brandi said that Olivier frequented the Spanish ambassador's home and that of a Portuguese. Olivier himself testified that he had Spanish Jewish relatives in the Ghetto, who helped him after his wounding. Finally, the tribunal was aware of Olivier's origin, as in the first interrogation the notary registered him as "Francisco Olivier from Lisbon".

However, the Inquisitor circumvented evidence indicating that Olivier was a New Christian. From the beginning the Inquisitor apparently structured the proceedings around the assumption that Olivier was a Jew, who violated the boundaries between the two religions. On that basis, some testimonies that described Olivier as a proper Jew strengthened the Inquisitor's assumption. At the second interrogation of the accused, the Inquisitor seemed to have been sure about Olivier's Jewishness. Therefore, it remained to determine the nature of the offence that Olivier had committed as a Jew. Thus, the Inquisitor asked Olivier about the purpose of his visit to the prostitute Laura. As Olivier responded that he did not seek accommodation there, but to visit Laura, the Inquisitor asked about his acquaintance with Laura. Olivier gave the response that enabled the tribunal to establish his guilt: "I know her as a friend of mine and courtesan and I met her for sexual reasons, as young people are accustomed to do".²³

In the Inquisitor's pursuit of proof of Olivier's Jewishness, circumcision was decisive. At the first interrogation of Olivier, in the official text that preceded the recording of the interrogation, Olivier was described as "circumcised".²⁴ The document does not indicate how the tribunal obtained the information, but in all probability, the tribunal either had inspected Olivier's circumcision or had

²² Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 223.

²³ Processi (1548 – 1560), 89.

²⁴ Ibid., 83: "Constituido...Francesco de Olivier de Ulsbona, circumciso".

interrogated him unofficially while he was imprisoned. The circumcision was the basis on which the Inquisitor structured the interrogation and shaped the identity of the accused. Olivier however willingly admitted the circumcision but declared that circumcision did not mark religious adherence and consequently he was Christian.²⁵ The importance that the Inquisition attached to circumcision as proof of Jewish identity, was recorded in the tribunal's verdict, where Olivier was described as "Jew and circumcised".²⁶

Francesco Olivier was the first person of New Christian origin to be brought before the Venetian Inquisition,²⁷ though he was not prosecuted as such. The tribunal dealt with his offence at a time shortly after its establishment (1547) when it started adopting a harsher attitude towards heresy and in the years 1547-9 its activities intensified.²⁸ Those early years of the Inquisition's activity, at least until the mid-1550s, have been seen as a period of transition. Although prosecution intensified, the mentality that underlined inquisitorial activity and the sentences inflicted was mainly reconciliatory, at least for offences relating to Reformation ideas.²⁹ Olivier's case can similarly be seen in the context of transition, although it differed in the harsh sentence. Within the intensification of Inquisition's activity, crimes related to Christian-Jewish relations were also brought on trial. A year before Olivier's trial, Giacomo Francoso, an Italian neophyte, had been sentenced to the galleys for twenty years for repeated baptisms.³⁰

The Inquisition was gradually becoming aware of a variety of offences and refining them. For instance, only in 1551 did the Inquisition distinguish between Protestant and Anabaptist ideas, whereas earlier the generic term Protestantism covered those offences.³¹ In this view, the Inquisitor was interested in enquiring into

²⁵ However, other defendants such as Abraam Righetto said that circumcision was an indispensable sign of Jewishness, see below 96.

²⁶ Ibid., 90: "...contra Francesco Olivier reo convinto, in eo, de eo et super eo che essendo zudeo et circumciso"; on the role of circumcision in later cases, 73, 87, 96, 109, 111; on circumcision and crypto-Muslims, 167; on circumcision and converts, 186 – 87, 197.

²⁷ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 223.

²⁸ A. Santosuosso, "The Moderate Inquisitor. Giovanni della Casa's Venetian Nunciature 1544-1549", *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., 2 (1978): 190 – 1.

²⁹ A. Jacobson Schutte., "Un inquisitore al lavoro: fra Marino da Venezia e l'Inquisizione veneziana", in *I Francescani in Europa tra Riforma e Controriforma. Atti del XIII convegno internazionale, Assisi, Ottobre 1985* (Perugia, 1987), 170, 186; Seidel Menchi, "Inquisizione come repressione", 53, 63, 75.

³⁰ Processi (1548 – 1560), 67 – 78.

³¹ Jacobson Schutte, "Un Inquisitore al lavoro", 175.

offences that sprang from the long-standing tradition stressing the separateness and subordination of Jews; especially in Venice, this policy was manifested by the Ghetto, the strict dress-code and the supervising lay magistracy of the *Ufficiali al Cattaver*. Consequently, Olivier's offence was tailored to comply with that tradition. Crypto-Judaism, especially of Iberian origin, was not yet on the Inquisition's agenda. It was the Venetian Senate that in the next year, in 1550, would bring, again after 1497, into the scene the problem of crypto-Judaism, by its decree expelling the Marranos from Venice.³²

Finally, the way that the Inquisitor conducted the trial against Olivier was also indicative of an internal process that the Inquisition usually followed. In particular, the framework of a trial was formed, to a large extent, by the type of the denunciation and the accusations it included. It was not usual for the Inquisitor to expand or change his investigation into other offences that might have appeared during the interrogations.³³ Considerations of money and time limited the potential of the tribunal. Of course, in cases where new offences appeared to be particularly serious, the Inquisitor might have moved to investigate them. The denunciation against Olivier described him as a Jew and implicitly accused him of transgression of the boundaries that defined a Jew's position. Subsequently, after having considered that there was sufficient evidence of guilt, the Inquisitor initiated and conducted the trial seeking to prove the correctness of the denunciation.

The first trial against Iberian crypto-Jews was conducted in 1555. Some of the most important members of the Portuguese community in Venice at that time were involved in the case, which seems to have sprung from rivalries within the community.³⁴ On 9 March 1555, an anonymous delator accused Duarte Gomez and Agostinho Enrichez, business agents of Beatriz de Luna alias Gracia Mendes, of having been Jews under the guise of Christians.³⁵ With some delay, on 8 April, the tribunal called the Spanish Jesuit Simone, who gave a new dimension informing that he suspected another Portuguese, Tristao or Licentiato Costa alias Abraham Abbibi,

³² See 81 – 3.

³³ Davidson, "The Inquisition in Venice and Its Documents", 130.

³⁴ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 177 – 8.

³⁵ Processi (1561 – 1570), 71 – 4.

who lived in the house of Brianda de Luna alias Brianda Mendes, of crypto-Jew.³⁶ Ready to pursue the new accusation, on 20 April, the Inquisitor Nicolò Veneto (1550 – 57) called the Spanish consul Tomàs Zornoza, who was asked only about Costa. Zornoza confirmed the suspicions about Costa and gave additional information about another alleged crypto-Jew, called Cardoso.³⁷ The tribunal's intention was to pursue all accusations, as it became apparent some days later in the interrogation of a new witness, the Spanish Gottardo Archari. The Inquisitor inquired into all suspects, including Cardoso. In his questions, the Inquisitor separated the accused persons into groups, according to the accusations' sequence. Initially he asked the witness about Gomez and Enrichez, later about Costa and at the end about Cardoso.³⁸

At the end of June 1555, the Inquisition ordered Tristao Costa's arrest. On the same day, his first interrogation took place. From the beginning, Costa did not hesitate at revealing his Jewish past.³⁹ Subsequently, the Inquisition asked him about his father's conversion. The establishment of Costa's baptism was of some importance to the Inquisitor. He insisted on when and how Costa received baptism. As the accused avoided giving direct answers, the Inquisitor posed his questions in different formulations.⁴⁰ The issue of baptism continued to preoccupy the Inquisitor throughout the interrogation. When Costa testified about his family, the Inquisitor intervened and asked him whether he got his children baptized.⁴¹

The Inquisitor appeared to have been aware of religious dissimulation and double identity. His awareness was reflected in the following question: "He was asked if when his father and brothers told him that he had been taken from his mother, as said above, he lived as a Christian or he lived as a Christian only outwardly".⁴² The Inquisitor avoided any reference to Judaism as the faith that Costa observed. The questions were structured around the practice of Christianity. The

³⁶ Processi (1548 – 1560), 226 – 27.

³⁷ Ibid., 251 – 2.

³⁸ Ibid., 227 – 8.

³⁹ Ibid., 252: "Io mi chiamo Trestano da Costa de Viana do Portugalo... El nome de mia madre non lo so perchè la restò hebrea nè so come se domandasse in hebreo. Et mio padre in hebreo si chiamava Isach".

⁴⁰ Ibid.: "Domandato se lui se fece christiano alhora over doppo [i.e. his father's conversion] et quando et dove,"; "Domandato se li è stato mai detto dal padre o dalli fratelli over da altri che'l sia stato battezzato et in che modo et in che loco et tempo".

⁴¹ Ibid., 253: "Dicens interrogatus: Io li feci battizar, ma el feci per paura della Inquisition".

⁴² Ibid.: "Domandato se al tempo che li fu detto dal padre et fratelli che lui fu levato dal petto della madre come de sopra esso viveva come christiano et se era vivuto per prova".

departure from Christianity was the subject under examination and the alleged offence. The Inquisitor pursued the examination of Costa's adherence to or departure from Christianity during his life. As Costa testified that he had been in Salamanca for studies for about ten years, the Inquisitor interrogated him about the religion he practiced there: "He was asked if in the period he stayed in Salamanca he lived as Christian".⁴³

As the interrogation went on, the Inquisitor wanted to clarify Costa's religious behaviour and proceeded with questions that required straightforward responses: "He was asked whether at present he was a Jew or Christian".⁴⁴ To Costa's vague responses, the Inquisitor insisted but before returning to the same question, he sought to clarify the Christian or Jewish origin of Costa's first name Tristao: "He was asked if this name Tristano is a Jewish or Christian name".⁴⁵ In the Inquisitor's eyes the nature of Costa's name constituted evidence.

The question about the name can be seen as one of those questions of secondary status that Inquisitors posed alternatively, when the accused avoided replying to the main question which would give the tribunal irrefutable proof of guilt. This type of secondary-status questions was designed to provide the Inquisition with "secondary-status evidence" which later would compel the accused, when confronted with it, to admit the main offences as sought by the Inquisitor. Otherwise, if the accused did not admit the main(s) offence(s), the Inquisition would use that secondary-status evidence to proceed to a potential sentence. A standard strategy used by the Inquisitor was to move from the general to the specific as the interrogation unfolded.⁴⁶ But even during the interrogation, the Inquisitor additionally used a general-specific-general tactic on a small scale. The Inquisitor's attempt to establish secondary-status evidence can be seen as a kind of an encircling strategy intended to allow the interrogated little latitude before the Inquisitor posed again his main questions. It was a strategy of step-by-step uncovering of "ultimate truth", before the Inquisitor required the final confession, sought already from the beginning of the interrogation. In Costa's interrogation the Inquisitor completed his step-by-step technique by returning to the initial question, this time accompanied by

⁴³ Ibid.: "Domandato se in quel tempo che'l stete in Salamanca el visse da christiano".

⁴⁴ Ibid., 254: "Domando se al presente lui è iudeo over christiano".

⁴⁵ Ibid.: "Domandato se questo nome de Tristano è nome de hebreo o de christiano".

an admonition: “He was advised that he should reply precisely whether he is a Jew or Christian”.⁴⁷

In his testimony, Costa carefully distanced himself from any outward conformity either to Christianity or Judaism by denying any sign of observance of any of those religions. The following dialogue is indicative:

Costa: I do not perform the acts of a Christian.

He was asked if he ever said prayers like a Jew or performed any other ceremony as a Jew and where.

[Costa] answered: Neither the one nor the other.

Nevertheless, Costa did not hesitate in implying his spiritual adherence: “I did not go to confession or communion because it [Salamanca] is a large city; I associated with some compatriots of mine and we were living in our way”.⁴⁸

This kind of outward detachment from any religion was not acceptable to the Inquisitor. That Tristao Costa was the first person to appear before the Venetian Inquisition as a crypto-Jew might explain the uneasiness with which the Inquisitor enquired into his conduct. The Inquisitor’s main attempt was to classify the religious identity of the accused, either through his confession or secondary evidence. Although he earlier avoided any reference to Judaism, now the Inquisitor turned to signs of Jewish adherence, asking whether he had recited Jewish prayers (as above), and then asked whether he had been circumcised and where and when it took place”.⁴⁹

As Costa avoided giving straightforward answers about his religious identity, the Inquisitor sought to find out signs that might have shown any kind of a minimum religious adherence. This examination was directed mainly towards indications that constituted part of a Christian identity. Costa’s first name was again examined as evidence for religious affiliation: “He was asked if in Venice he uses a Christian

⁴⁶ Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 83 – 4.

⁴⁷ Processi (1548 – 1560), 254: “Admonitus ut precise respondeat ad interrogationem se lui è zudeo o christiano”; see another example, 93 – 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid.: “Io non fazo opere da christiano”; “Domandato se ha mai detto oration alla hebrea o fatto altra cerimonia alla hebrea et dove, response: Nè l’una nè l’altra.”; 253: “Non mi confessavo nè comunicavo perchè la città è granda et io stava in compagnia de certi altri miei compatriota et vivevamo a modo nostro”.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 254: “Domandato se è stato retagliato et dove et quando”.

name and he says or had said that he is a Christian”.⁵⁰ Additionally, the Inquisitor attempted to reach a conclusion examining Costa if he had ever taken an oath in his contracts. An oath was regarded as critical, and the Inquisitor persistently asked if he had taken the oath in Venice. In the end, the final question was followed by the usual admonition: “It does not seem probable that he does not remember such a thing, so give a precise answer of yes or no”.⁵¹ Later, another set of questions concerned any possible inclination towards Christianity by expression of piety in public: “He was asked if he has ever been to any church while he has been in Venice”; “He was asked if he knelt and took off his hat in church”.⁵²

The Inquisitor was reluctant to accept the double identity with which Costa presented himself. Religious identity comprised a series of signs and in the eyes of the Inquisitor outward signs counted as much as a declaration of adherence to a faith. The reluctance to accept the inconsistency between outward and inward adherence to different religions, led the Inquisitor to express his disbelief and confusion: “He was asked, having been a Jew inwardly, what was the reason that he was dressed as a Christian in Venice where normally the Jews wear clothes to be distinguished from the Christians”.⁵³

The Inquisitor continued the interrogation on other aspects that might have revealed Costa’s relation to Christianity. His social contacts, particularly with his employer, Brianda de Luna came under examination. At the same time, the Inquisitor took the opportunity to include in the examination other persons that might have been suspect. The Inquisitor asked Costa about Brianda de Luna’s religious identity: “He was asked if the lady lives as a Christian or Jew”. As Costa replied that De Luna lived as Christian, the Inquisitor did not miss the chance of pointing out the unusual coexistence at the same home of a Christian and a Jew: “He was asked if the said

⁵⁰ Ibid.: “Domandato se qui in Venetia spende nome de christiano et se’l dice o l’ha detto de esser christiano”.

⁵¹ Ibid.: “Domandato se mai in li contrati ha giurato,”; “Domandato se in Venetia li è mai stato dato iuramento”; “Et essendoli detto che non è veresimile che’l non se ricorda de una cosa de tanto momento et che perhò el responda precise o sì opur non”.

⁵² Ibid., 255: “Domandato se mai per il tempo che l’è in Venetia l’hè stato in giesia alchuna,”; “Domandato se’l se ingenochiava et cavava la beretta in giesia”.

⁵³ Ibid., 254: “Domandato, essendo zudeo intrinseco, per che causa el veste da christiano in Venetia dove ordinariamente li Giudei vanno con habito destinto dalli Christiani”; on the Inquisitor’s undermining of inward religious belief see below, 90 – 101, 107, 165 – 68; see the different approach, 186 – 91.

Brianda knows that he is and lives as a Jew”⁵⁴; particularly, the way their different dietary customs fitted in drew the Inquisitor’s attention: “He was asked, since the lady lives as a Christian, how he ate living as a Jew”. Dietary customs were regarded as sign of religious adherence and the Inquisitor insisted on how Costa followed his Jewish diet living with Christians.⁵⁵

While the Inquisitor sought to establish the religious identity of the accused, Tristao Costa succeeded in controlling the interrogation to some extent. Costa took advantage of the Inquisitor’s uneasiness and possible unfamiliarity with other similar cases and exercised some control by posing his own terms.⁵⁶ The way the first day of the interrogation concluded is indicative of how Costa was able to lead the trial. The Inquisitor posed the standard question whether the accused was aware or assumed the reason for the arrest at the end of the session (whereas this question normally opened a session). Costa avoided any direct reference to the substance of the accusation against him; instead, he named Agostinho Enriches, Duarte Gomez, Jerónimo Vaes and some others as trade rivals, who wanted to oust him from Venice and harm his employer Brianda de Luna. Costa referred to them as “my rivals, who are of the same Marrano background”.⁵⁷ This tactic to change the terms of the interrogation proved successful, as the Inquisitor directed his next question to the hints Costa had given, asking how he knew these people were of the same background.⁵⁸ Costa’s subsequent answer manifested further that he sought to lead the interrogation: “Because they are from my country and they live here [Venice] as Christians but when they go to Ferrara they live as Jews”.⁵⁹ Costa took advantage of the Inquisitor’s possible unawareness of the different situation in Ferrara, where Jews did not live confined, as in Venice, and where policy towards Portuguese Jews was more favourable.⁶⁰ The

⁵⁴ Ibid., 255: “Domandato se la detta Brianda sa che lui sia hebreo et viva da hebreo”.

⁵⁵ Ibid.: “Domandato vivendo la detta signora da christiana in che modo mangiava lui vivendo da hebreo”.

⁵⁶ On the defendant’s ability to lead the interrogation, see the useful remarks, Martin, *Venice’s Hidden Enemies*, 12 – 4.

⁵⁷ Processi (1548 – 1560), 255: “Domandato se lui sa o presume della sua retention, respose: Io presumo che la causa sia per causa de alchuni miei adversarii che sono della medesima generatione de Marani et sono Agustin Enriches et Odoardo Gomez et Hieronimo Vaes”; on the affairs between the Mendes family and Venice: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 178 – 79.

⁵⁸ Processi (1548 – 1560), 255: “Domandato come sa lui che li predetti siano della istessa generation”.

⁵⁹ Ibid.: “Perchè sono della patria mia et qui vivono da Christiani et vano a Ferara donde vivono da Hebrei”.

⁶⁰ In the 1550s, the Duke of Ferrara encouraged the settlement of Iberian Jews, mostly of Marrano origin: R. Segre, “Sephardic Settlements”, 125.

Inquisitor continued to examine Costa's allegations and asked him to provide the names of witnesses who could give additional information. Costa said that he did not know any particular person but what he testified "was discussed throughout Rialto".⁶¹

On 15 July 1555, Costa came before the Inquisition for a second interrogation. This session opened with a long monologue by Costa exposing with more details the reasons for his denunciation. Any reference to the nature of the accusations against him was avoided; instead, he focused on the background of the trade rivalry that led to his prosecution. At the end of the monologue, Costa again implied his accusers' suspect identity testifying that "they have been in this land [Venice] because they want to harm me and Brianda in order to compel her to depart for Turkey; and because of this all the above mentioned remain in this territory, otherwise they would have gone to Turkey too".⁶²

The Inquisitor was determined to repeat the questions to uncover Costa's religious conduct during his life. Despite what Costa had testified in the first interrogation, the Inquisitor continued the examination with a question that showed that Costa's previous allegations on his religious identity were not acceptable: "He was asked if he has lived secretly as a Christian in the last twenty years".⁶³ This was a usual tactic to repeat interrogations giving the impression that the examination started from the beginning and that the earlier testimonies of the accused did not count. The question on Costa's conduct over the last twenty years is of particular interest. The Inquisitor indirectly posed a *terminus a quo* that coincided with the Inquisition's establishment in Portugal in 1536. Costa attempted to avoid responding and referred to his answer in the first interrogation, but the Inquisitor urged him to give a new reply.⁶⁴ The same happened some questions later, when the Inquisitor interrogated Costa on his circumcision. Costa refused to tell the time of his circumcision replying

⁶¹ Processi (1548 – 1560), 255: "Domandato come lo sa, respose: El se dice per tutto Rialto".

⁶² Ibid., 257: "che costoro non cerchano altro che cavarme per qualche via che sia dalla signora Brianda et metterla in desperatione che se ne vada in Turchia et per questo tutti loro sopraditti soprastano in questa terra, che altramente tutti sariano andati in Turchia".

⁶³ Ibid.: "Domandato se lui costituito in effetto ha vivuto da vinti anni in qua come christiano intrinsecamente".

⁶⁴ Ibid.: "Me refferisco a quel che ho detto. Et essendoli detto che'l responda senza alchuna relatione,"

that he had already said it in the first interrogation, but the Inquisitor demanded a new reply.⁶⁵

At this second interrogation, Costa unfolded his argumentation on the double nature of his religious conduct and revealed the substance of his identity:

In Portugal I lived inwardly as a Jew and outwardly as a Christian because I was forced to do so; Later, when I left Portugal, some fourteen years ago, until I arrived in Ferrara, I lived partly as Christian and partly as Jew because in Antwerp I was afraid of the Inquisition. In Ferrara, I lived inwardly and outwardly as a Jew but I kept the name, so sometimes I was called Tristano. In Venice, I lived as a Jew, and outwardly I wore the black hat, thanks to the safe-conduct and I used the name Licentiato Costa.⁶⁶

The Inquisitor was reluctant to accept the distinction between outward and inward religious conduct. He drew on outward signs as indications of religious identity, and again focused on clarifying the Jewish or Christian origin of Costa's name and the way the accused used his name: "He was asked if these names, Licentiato Costa, are names of a Christian or a Jew and if he named himself after this name or surname in order to declare himself a Christian or Jew". The Inquisitor's insistence on outward signs and belief's convergence was an attempt to include the external signs as a measure of Costa's adherence to Christianity. In this view, as long as Costa maintained that he had used some outward Christian signs, the Inquisitor continued pressing for further explanation: "He was asked, since he lived as a Jew inwardly and even outwardly apart from the things that he mentioned earlier for what reason he didn't name himself after his Jewish name and surname".⁶⁷

To Costa's argument that it was inward adherence that shaped religious identity, the Inquisitor sought to undermine the value of inward affiliation. Motivated

⁶⁵ Ibid., 259: "Domandato quando tempo è che l'è circunciso, respose: L'ho detto nel primo interrogatorio. Et essendoli detto che'l responda a l'interrogatorio fattoli al presente".

⁶⁶ Ibid., 257 – 58: "Intrinsecamente io viveva da zudeo et estrinsecamente io viveva da christiano per forza in Portogallo et doppo che mi son partito da Portogallo, che possino esser da 14 anni in circa, in alchune cose fino che son venuto in Ferrara son vivesto da christiano, in alchune cose da hebreo et questo per la paura che havevo perchè in Anversa ghe era Inquisition. In Ferara in ogni cosa son vivuto come hebreo intrinsecamente et extrinsecamente preter del nome, che qualche volta mi nominava per Tristano. Et in Venetia son vivuto da hebreo et extrinsecamente portava la baretta negra per causa del salvocondutto et mi chiamavo Licentiato Costa".

⁶⁷ Ibid., 258: "Domandato se questi nomi Licentiato Costa sono nomi da christiano o da hebreo et se si faceva nominar per tal nome o cognome per esser cognosciuto per christiano over per hebreo"; "Domandato per qual causa adonque, vivendo intrinsecamente come giudeo et anche estrinsecamente, eccetto in le cose sopradette, non se faceva nominar per el nome et cognome hebreo suo".

by Costa's partly outward conformity to Christianity, the Inquisitor attempted to portray him as being torn between Judaism and Christianity and additionally forced to live as a Jew. Within this context, the Inquisitor examined whether Costa's return to Portugal after his studies in Salamanca was the result of compulsion: "He was asked, if after he left Portugal and went to Antwerp and Salamanca, he was compelled by violence or fear to return to Portugal". Costa's marriage to Francisca Perera, who was "from the same nation of Jews" came under similar suspicion: "He was asked if, after he returned to Portugal, he was compelled by anyone, or by violence or fear to get married".⁶⁸

Circumcision drew again the Inquisitor's attention. As Costa said that he had been born a Jew and upon his birth he got circumcised, the Inquisitor discounted the importance of infant circumcision and asked him whether he got circumcised again later.⁶⁹ This question exemplifies the strategy that the Inquisitor developed at the second interrogation. He deliberately avoided any reference to Costa's childhood, adolescence and family past. Those years were not of interest to the Inquisitor; his strategy was to distance Costa from his family past and the period he was under family influence. The Inquisitor's questions focused on Costa's adulthood. Those years when Costa's religious conduct was shaped by his own will and the coercion caused by the Inquisition's establishment in Portugal in 1536, were the period under investigation. Then Costa was in his mid-thirties. Already at the beginning of the second interrogation, the Inquisitor had posed the *terminus a quo* of how Costa had behaved in the last twenty years. The Inquisitor was ready to accept that Costa's Jewishness was not a personal choice; external, in all probability, family factors, made him remain in Judaism.

The Inquisitor's attempt was to undermine Costa's adherence to Judaism during his years in Portugal after the establishment of the Inquisition. It could also be said that the Inquisitor based his attempt on the supposition that the Inquisition's repressive activity had discouraged Costa's adherence to Judaism and had moved him towards Christianity. The Inquisitor unfolded gradually his tactic. The initial question concerned the possibility that Costa was able to leave Portugal soon after his

⁶⁸ Ibid., 259: "Domandato se doppo che lui uscì de Portogallo et andò in Anversa et Salamanca è statto costretto da alchuno per forza o per paura a ritornar a Portogallo"; "Domandato se, retornato che lui fu a Portogallo, fu costretto da persona alchuna o per forza o per paura a tener la moglie".

marriage or earlier: “He was asked if he were free to leave Portugal and go wherever he wanted immediately after his marriage or earlier”. Subsequent questions revealed the attempt to doubt Costa’s adherence to Judaism. In an exceptional question for Inquisitors, the Inquisitor asked Costa about his estimation of his religion and the priority that he gave to religion and fortune: “What do you value highly, the faith or your goods?” A final straightforward question concluded the Inquisitor’s technique: “He was asked if he were able to sell his property and leave Portugal why he didn’t sell it and leave so that he didn’t have to live against his faith with great fear for his estate and life, especially esteeming faith more than fortune”. It was a tactic intended to doubt Costa’s conduct as a Jew. This tactic continued in the short third and final interrogation on 16 July 1555. Costa was interrogated on his religious conduct after his marriage to Francisca Perera and for the period he had been in Portugal, c. 1533 – 43: “He was asked if for the period after he returned from Salamanca to Portugal and got married to Francisca Perera he confessed, received communion and went to Mass”.⁷⁰

Throughout the interrogations, Tristao Costa formulated his responses in such a way by providing information that the Inquisitor’s questions did not require; by this technique he succeeded in maintaining some control of the interrogation and allowing the Inquisitor little latitude for posing new questions. In the same vein, on many occasions Costa’s responses covered questions that were bound to follow. For instance, when he was asked whether he was forced to get married, Costa not only covered the question but also gave an explanation of why he got married to Francisca Perera: “I got married of my free will, because she came from Jewish background”. Costa followed the same pattern in a subsequent question too. Asked whether he had got married according to the Jewish or Christian custom, Costa replied by adding the reason behind the choice of custom: “[I was married] according to the Christian law

⁶⁹ Ibid.: “Son nato hebreo et quando nacqui fui circunciso. Domandato se l’è doppo stato più tagliato”.

⁷⁰ Ibid.: “Adimandato si era in libertà sua subito che l’ fu maridato et ancho inanzi il partirsi de Portugalo et andar dove li pareva”; Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 214; Processi (1540 – 1560), 260: “Dimandato se l’era in facultà sua de poter vender il suo et partirse de Portugalo per qual causa non la vendete et non si partì senza haver viver contra la fede sua, con gran timor dela roba et dela vita, maximamente stimando più la fede che la roba”; 261: “fu domandato se doppo che esso constituto retornò in Portugallo da Salamanca et si maritò con Francesca Perera sua moglier, nel tempo che è con lei in Portugallo, se è confessato, comunicato et udit la messa”.

out of fear of the Inquisition".⁷¹ At an earlier part of the interrogation, responding to the question about the date and place of birth of his sons, Costa gave an overall answer by including issues not mentioned by the Inquisitor and pointing out straightforwardly that he and his children lived as crypto-Jews in Ferrara:

My first son was born in Portugal and I got him baptized because I was forced to do so, because there was the Inquisition in Portugal and if didn't have him baptized I would be burnt at the stake. The same happened with my second son and the third too. Later I came to Ferrara where I stayed with my sons for about four months and as long as I had been there we lived as Jews except that we wore the black hat and were called by Christian names.⁷²

Costa was careful in giving answers that showed his firm adherence to Judaism even without outward conformity, and not allowing obscure points that the Inquisitor would spot and take advantage of. As the interrogations went on, Costa unfolded the style of responses that helped him to allow little latitude to the Inquisitor to lead the interrogation. Another technique that Costa followed was to demonstrate at each question his firm adherence to Judaism and to eliminate any reference that might have indicated relations with Christianity. Even in questions that did not concern him, Costa turned his answer into a firm declaration of his Jewishness. For instance, at the end of the second interrogation, when the Inquisitor asked him about the conduct of Brianda de Luna and the others at her home, Costa took the opportunity to give an answer that had to do mainly with himself:

All those who stay at Brianda's home, apart from my sons when they lived in the house of the said lady, have Christian names and tell me that they observe Christian customs. I do not know if this is true or not because I do not go to church [...] and their dietary customs are different from mine, particularly they eat meat and fish and other foods as

⁷¹ Ibid., 259: "Io tolsi la moglie per mio voler per esser del genere delli Hebrei"; "Domandato se quando se maritò, se maritò secondo la lege christiana over secundo la ebraica, respose: Secondo la lege christiana per la paura dela Inquisitione".

⁷² Ibid.: "Domandato donde sono nati li fioli et quando tempo è che sono nati: El primo ha anni 20 in 21 in circa, el secondo de 19 in circa, el terzo de 12 in 13 anni. El maggior è nato in Portogallo et io lo feci battezar perchè fui compulso perchè in Portogallo era la Inquisition et se non lo facevo battizar mi facevano brusar. El secondo medesemamente. El terzo medesemamente. Doppo veni a Ferara donde steti con li miei figlioli da quatro mesi in circa et per quel poco tempo che io stevo in Ferrara viveva con mei figlioli da hebreo, seben vestivemo con baretta negra et si chiamavamo per nome de Christiani".

the Christians do, and I ate what my son prepared for me and I use different pots from them.⁷³

Finally, the Inquisition did not pass any sentence against Tristao Costa. He remained in custody until the end of August 1555. On 21 August, the Council of Ten, which in the meantime had taken over the case, ordered that Costa should be released and depart from Venice and all the lands of the Republic within fifteen days. The same measures were also taken against Brianda de Luna. The Council of Ten annulled the safe-conduct that had issued in 1544 for Brianda de Luna and her personnel.

In the background of Costa and De Luna's deportation, a controversy developed between the Venetian government and Rome. In Rome, the election of Paul IV in 1555 was a turning point in the papal policy towards judaizing New Christians. Though early sixteenth-century Popes considered forced baptism valid, Clement VII, Paul III and Julius III had encouraged the settlement of Iberian Jews in Ancona, assuring them that they would not be judged on religious matters by the Inquisition or secular authorities.⁷⁴ The problem of forced converts was debated by canonists, officials in the Curia and Popes, and according to one view "Those should not be considered as members of the Church who were forcibly baptized".⁷⁵ Paul IV's new policy started with the Bull *Cum nimis absurdum* in 17 July 1555 by which the Roman Ghetto was established.⁷⁶ In 1556, Paul IV decreed that the forced baptism of New Christians was valid and any return to Judaism, open or secret,

⁷³ Ibid., 260: "Domandato quante persone in casa dela Brianda vivevano da Christiani et quanti da Giudei intrinsecamente et estrinsecamente, respose: Tutti quelli che sono in casa della signora, preter li mei figlioli quando stavano in casa della ditta signora, hanno nome da Christiani et loro me dicono che fano opera da Christiani. Se così è over non mi non lo so perchè io non vado alla giesia [...] et nel mangiar loro mangiano diversamente da me cioè carne et pesce et altre cose come mangiano li Christiani et io mangiavo de quello che mi conciaua mio fiol et le mie pignate sono differenti dalle sue".

⁷⁴ On the presence of Portuguese Jews in Ancona: A. di Leone Leoni, "Per una storia della nazione portoghese ad Ancona e a Pesaro", in Ioly Zorattini, *L'Identità Dissimulata*, 27 – 97; Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 173.

⁷⁵ Quoted in ibid., 173; see also: A. Foa, "Un vescovo marrano: il processo a Pedro de Aranda (Roma 1498)", *Quaderni Storici*, n.s., 99, 3 (1998): 533 – 52.

⁷⁶ On the background of the Bull: K. Stow, *Theater of Acculturation. The Roman Ghetto in the Sixteenth Century* (Seattle and London, 2001), 62 – 3; A. Foa, "Il gioco del proselitismo: politica delle conversioni e controllo della violenza nella Roma del Cinquecento", in *Ebrei e cristiani nell'Italia medievale e moderna. Conversioni, scambi, contrasti*, ed. M. Luzzatti, M. Olivari and A. Veronese (Rome, 1988), 155 – 169.

would be considered apostasy.⁷⁷ The Pope implemented this policy to Jews of New Christian origin who lived in Ancona with some of them burnt at the stake in 1556.⁷⁸

Tristao Costa was caught in the transition period, as the new policy was promulgated but had not been decreed yet. In this view, Filippo Archinto, the papal nuncio to Venice, expressed this new policy in the Collegio, when he asked the government to allow the Inquisition to proceed against Tristao Costa. The Collegio dismissed the nuncio's proposal reminding him of Julius III's policy.⁷⁹ On the other hand, the Venetian government was particularly sensitive about the affairs of the De Luna-Mendes family and their connections with the Ottoman Empire. Earlier in 1553, it had banished from the Republic's lands João Miquez, nephew of the Mendes, the future Don Yosef Nasi, Duke of Naxos, because of his involvement in the kidnapping of Brianda de Luna's daughter.⁸⁰

The Venetian government's order for Costa's and De Luna's deportation, was based on legislation of 1550, by which it required all Marranos to leave Venice within two months. Similar measures had been taken earlier in 1497. The Senate's ban was in accordance with the policy of Charles V against the Marranos in Antwerp but it was also an expression of conformity to Catholic orthodoxy, as the papal nuncio had seen it. In reality, the legislation was directed mainly against Iberian Jews who lived in the guise of Christians and not against those who decided to settle in the Ghetto.⁸¹ In the case of De Luna, the Venetian government was reluctant to accept the new papal policy, but on the other hand, was determined to implement the deportation, despite the intervention of the King of France on behalf of De Luna to allow her to settle as a Jew in the Ghetto.⁸²

⁷⁷ The decree is published in L. von Pastor, "Allgemeine Dekrete der römischen Inquisition aus den Jahren 1555-1597", *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft*, 33 (1912): 496.

⁷⁸ The change in papal policy and the encounters with the Venetian government are illustrated in Ravid, "Venice, Rome, and the Reversion of New Christians", in Ioly Zorattini, *L'identità dissimulata*, 151 – 60; on papal policy, A. Prosperi, "L'Inquisizione romana e gli ebrei", in *L'Inquisizione e gli ebrei in Italia*, ed. M. Luzzati (Rome, 1994), 67 – 119.

⁷⁹ Processi, Appendici, 37.

⁸⁰ B. Ravid, "Money, Love and Power Politics in Sixteenth Century Venice: The Perpetual Banishment and Subsequent Pardon of Joseph Nasi", in *Italia Judaica, Atti del I convegno internazionale, Bari 18-22 maggio 1981* (Rome, 1983), 159 – 74.

⁸¹ The decree is published in D. Kaufmann, "Die Vertreibung der Marranen aus Venedig im Jahre 1550", *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 13, (1900 – 1): 527-30; Pullan, *The Jew of Europe*, 177; Segre, "Sephardic Settlements", 115, 121.

⁸² Processi (1548 – 1560), 349 – 51.

In the final analysis, the divergence between Venice and Rome concerned the type of punishment to be inflicted on Costa and De Luna. Whereas Rome would opt for a corporal punishment through the Inquisition, the Venetian government opted for deportation according to its legislation. In any case both were hostile against judaizing New Christians. Moreover, the Venetian government wanted to retain its sovereignty, especially due to the safe-conduct it had issued. Many years later, in 1621, in the case of the Diaz family the government was reluctant to allow their prosecution, as the nuncio demanded.⁸³ Again, the government had issued a safe-conduct, which it afterwards annulled ordering the Diaz' deportation.⁸⁴ However, in the case of the De Nis family in 1585,⁸⁵ where no safe-conduct existed, the Venetian state through its deputies in the Inquisition sided with the Inquisition against the family and other Jews from the Ghetto, who were indirectly involved in the case.

Beyond that official confrontation, at the level of inquisitorial practice and discourse some developments can be discerned. Though the Inquisition was not allowed to proceed against Tristao Costa, the new policy of Paul IV, which the nuncio sought to introduce in Venice, seems not to have affected the Venetian tribunal's discourse yet. Costa was the first person to appear before the Inquisition accused of crypto-Judaism. In the inquisitorial discourse during the interrogations, baptism, which would play a central role in the new papal legislation, remained of secondary importance. The Inquisitor focused mainly on the conduct of Tristao Costa as indicative of his religious identity. Regarding baptism, it can be said that the inquisitorial discourse still reflected more the policy of previous Popes. The Inquisitor was alert to accusations but not yet ready to move along the lines of the new papal approach.

The uneasiness that characterized inquisitorial discourse during Costa's interrogation continued later as the Inquisitor went on to examine the accusations of crypto-Judaism against Duarte Gomez and Agostinho Enrichez, agents of Beatriz de Luna. However, the Inquisitor appeared to have been committed, at least, to examine all the accusations and suspicions of crypto-Judaism that emerged in the course of the trial, as he had also done in the initial hearing. In the interrogation on Brianda de

⁸³ On the case see above, 8 – 9, 11, 15, 20, 26, 29, 35, 58.

⁸⁴ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 194.

⁸⁵ On the case, 16, 20, 26, 27, 46, 52 – 3, 54 – 6, 58, 59, 103 – 18, 119, 122.

Luna's religious conduct, the Inquisitor took advantage of his discoveries from the interrogations of Costa regarding the tactics of dissimulation and asked well-formulated questions that aimed to allow as little ambiguity as possible: "He [Costa] was asked how many persons live as Christians in Brianda's home and how many as Jews inwardly and outwardly". As the Inquisitor sought more evidence on Brianda's conduct he examined signs of outward devotion, such as the existence of icons at home or genuflection and reciting of the Ave Maria when the bells sounded.⁸⁶

Although Costa did not say anything against Brianda de Luna's religious conduct, suspicion was aroused about her, and so the Inquisitor called the parish priest of SS. Ermagora e Fortunato church (S. Marcuola) to confirm that he had licensed Brianda to consume meat on fast days due to an illness, as Costa had earlier testified. The Inquisitor examined the priest on the frequency with which Brianda visited the church and whether she confessed and received communion at Easter and Christmas. Finally, the Inquisitor examined the priest whether he had ever been in Brianda's home and seen any icons.⁸⁷

This first encounter with crypto-Judaism constituted for the Inquisitor a part of a learning process and proved to be beneficial for subsequent interrogations. Tristao Costa's techniques of dissimulation made the Inquisitor more aware of the conduct of alleged crypto-Jews. This awareness became obvious as the Inquisitor proceeded to investigate into the case of Duarte Gomez. Tristao Costa's testimony at the last session about his tactics in going to confession and communion alarmed the Inquisitor:

[In Portugal] I confessed some times and went to Mass but I did not receive communion although I was claiming that I received communion. For this reason I used to go [to churches] where many people received communion and I mixed with them but I did not receive communion.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Processi (1548 – 1560), 260: "Domandato quante persone in casa dela Brianda vivono da Christiani et quanti da Giudei intrinsecamente et estrinsecamente"; 260 – 1: "Domandato se la Brianda tiene in casa sua imagine"; "Domandato se quando sona l'Avemaria, ha veduto alchuno di casa ingignochiarsi et dir l'Ave Maria".

⁸⁷ Ibid., 261: "Domandato se lui da tempo alchuno ha veduto in giesia la ditta Brianda et li suoi de casa,"; "Domandato se da Pasqua e da Nadal se sono andati a confessar et comunicar"; "Domandato se l'è stato mai in casa sua et se le ha veduto imagine de sorte alchuna".

Later, as Duarte Gomez testified that he did not fulfill his religious duties in the parish church but in Venice's cathedral suspicion was aroused, and the Inquisitor insisted that Gomez had to prove that he went to confession and communion regularly.

For the first years of the Inquisition's establishment, the Inquisitor was anxious to gather bits of information and apply them in later similar cases. During those years the identification of crypto-Jewish conduct and identity was still fluid and cases of crypto-Judaism served as a learning process for the Inquisition's officials. And as the case of Tristao Costa and Duarte Gomez constituted to a certain extent aspects of the same proceedings, the Inquisitor did not miss the opportunity to make use of evidence from the one case to the other.

Duarte Gomez's first interrogation took place on 3 August 1555. Although Gomez testified that he was a Christian, the Inquisitor was interested in uncovering the religious background of Gomez's family: "He was asked if he has always been a Christian and if he were born to a Christian father and Christian mother". The Inquisitor appeared to have been suspicious of a distant non-Christian background of the accused, and determined to trace back his origin. As Gomez confirmed that he had always been Christian and that he was born into a Christian family, the Inquisitor asked whether his father had always been a Christian. On being told that Gomez's father was not always Christian, the Inquisitor asked how long the father had been a Christian. Additional questions concerned again the religious status of Gomez's family. The Inquisitor seemed to be aware of the complicated and multifaceted nature of the crime of alleged judaizing he investigated and posed explicit questions, whether he had brothers and sisters, how many and what their religion was; then whether his wife and children were Christians.⁸⁹

Duarte Gomez presented himself as a firm Christian. The Inquisitor investigated whether his conduct was that of a proper Christian. His questions were directed towards the regularity with which Gomez and his children went to

⁸⁸ Ibid., 261 – 62: "Mi confessai alcune volte et andava alla messa, ma non me comunicava anchora che mi diceva che comunicava perhò che io andava dalle persone che comunicavano dove le era assai persone che se comunicavano et io metteva tra de loro, ma non me comunicava".

⁸⁹ Ibid., 230: "Domandato se sempre è stato christiano et se è nato da christiano et christiana, response: Sempre son stato christiano, son nato da christiana et da christiano"; "Domandato se suo padre è stato sempre christiano"; "Domandato quando tempo è che suo padre è fatto christiano"; "Domandato se lui

confession and communion. Gomez testified that over the last four years he had gone to confession and communion every year, but in different places and to different clerics. This lack of stability caused anxiety for the Inquisitor, who investigated further Gomez's participation in the Sacraments, asking "whether he ever confessed and received communion in any place where other people who were present could confirm it".⁹⁰ Additionally, the Inquisitor attempted to reach some conclusions about Gomez by examining his social contacts. Gomez was asked about Agostinho Enrichez and his conduct. Later he was examined whether he or Enrichez maintained relations with Jews and whether these relations extended out of trade affairs, and if both associated with Jews regarding eating, drinking and sleeping. A final examination concerned his relations with Beatriz de Luna, especially whether he had maintained ties after he learnt that she had turned Jew.⁹¹

The Inquisitor did not have much latitude in examining Gomez' conduct, as the denunciators and the witnesses had provided little information. The only piece of information that the Inquisitor utilised was from Gottardo Archari's testimony that while discussing the customs of Christians, Turks and Jews, Gomez did not say anything, whereas the other discussants agreed on the superiority of the Christian customs. At the first interrogation, the Inquisitor asked him whether he had ever discussed the customs of Christians, Jews and Turks, but Gomez answered explicitly that he had talked about the Christian and Jewish religions but not that of the Turks and that the conclusion of that discussion was the vanity of Judaism and the superiority of Christianity.⁹²

ha fratelli e sorelle et quanti et dove et de che religion,"; "Domandato se la moglie et li figlioli sono christiani".

⁹⁰ Ibid.: Domandato se lui se confessa et comunica ogni anno et se'l fa che li soi figlioli similmente se confessino et comunichino secondo che comanda la santa Madre Gesia"; 231: "Domandato, se in tuto il tempo de vita sua si è confessato et comunicato in alcun loco dove fussero persone presente dale qual se ne possa haver la verità".

⁹¹ Ibid., 231: "Domandato se Agostin Enriches suo compagno se confessa et comunica secondo che comanda la santa Madre Giesia"; 232: "Domandato se lui over il suo compagno hanno comertio et conversation con Giudei et con quali et a che fin et effetto,"; "Domandato se ancho conversano insieme con li ditti Giudei nel manzar, beber et dormir"; "Domandato se, dopo che lui ha inteso che la è hebreia, ha conversato et negoziato cosa alcuna con lei".

⁹² See Gottardo Archari's deposition, ch. 1, 26; Processi (1548 – 1560), 232: "Domandato se esso costituito è mai venuto in ragionamento con alcuna persona dele cerimonie de Christiani, Turchi et Hebrei et con chi et a che proposito et che cosa fu ragionato sopra ciò, rispose: Diverse volte l'è occorso a ragionar con l'imbassador de Spagna, con el secretario de Fiorenza, con el magnifico meser Marco da Molin et con suo figliolo meser Nicolò, con meser Zuan Augustin de Marin et con diversi altri dela religion de Christiani et de Hebrei, ma de Turchi non. Et finalmente la conclusion di nostri

Immediately after the first interrogation, the tribunal asked for inspection of Gomez's and his son's circumcision. It was the first time that the tribunal called specialists to examine suspects' circumcision. Gomez's testimonies did not convince the Inquisitor and therefore circumcision might have proved his alleged apostasy. The Inquisitor never asked the accused about his circumcision, as he had done earlier in the case of Tristao Costa. It appears that for the tribunal, circumcision shaped religious identities objectively. Nevertheless, the results of the inspection were vague. One of the inspectors, the physician Giovanni Battista de Freschi Olivi, a former Jew, said that Gomez' son, Gonçalvo was not circumcised but he was not able to give a firm answer on Gomez. The other inspector, fra Ippolito da Ferrara, a former Jew too, said that Gomez was not circumcised.⁹³

After the inspection's vague results, the Inquisitor turned his focus on Gomez's conduct as a good Christian. The second interrogation opened with the question whether Gomez confessed and received communion once a year. The only issue that the Inquisitor continued to find obscure was Gomez's avoidance of fulfilling his Christian duties in the parish church. The Inquisitor's question was structured around this point: he asked whether "he [Gomez] knows that the Church commands that once a year after having confessed, every good Christian should receive communion in his parish church and not anywhere else".⁹⁴ Gomez defended his conduct by arguing that in his country someone who did not receive communion in the parish church was allowed to do so in the cathedral. For that reason as a foreigner in Venice he thought that he could fulfil his duties in the city's cathedral, which he was under the impression was S. Marco, but later found out that it was S. Pietro di Castello.⁹⁵

Evidently, after the initial interrogations and the examination of the circumcision, crypto-Judaism ceased to be a feature of the inquisitorial procedure. The accomplishment of Christian duties became the central point in the second interrogation and in the pursuit of truth, the Inquisitor exercised his power by such

ragionamenti è stata che la religion de Hebrei tuti sono vanità et che la religion christiana è bona et santa".

⁹³ Ibid., 233.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 234: "fu domandato se'l sa che è ordinato dala Giesia che ogni bon christiano una volta a l'anno de necessità, fata la debita confessione, si comunichi nela giesia dela sua parochia et non altrove".

⁹⁵ Ibid.

questions: “It does not seem plausible that a learned and intelligent man like you confessed to a friar that you did not know; so for the sake of clarification to justice, since you said that you would recognise this friar who confessed you, by any means you have to find him”.⁹⁶ It is to be noted that this is a rare example where the notary appears to give the Inquisitor’s direct words to the witness, instead of in reported speech and maybe summary reportage.

This examination of the annual confession and communion in the parish church stands as an example of how the Inquisitor pursued the control of the interrogation by an appropriate sequence of questions and answers, according to his view. The Inquisitor seemingly went to interrogate accused persons having already prepared his strategy.⁹⁷ By the initial question the Inquisitor required just a positive or negative answer. Instead, Gomez gave a reply, which covered also the questions that the Inquisitor was ready to pose. But the Inquisitor was determined to follow a specific succession of questions and as a result, he continued to examine issues already answered in Gomez’s reply:

He was asked if he knows that the Church commands that once a year after having confessed, every good Christian should receive communion in the parish church and not anywhere else.

[Gomez] *answered*: Yes, sir, but in my country someone who does not receive communion in the parish church is equally allowed to go to the cathedral and fulfil his duty. So as a foreigner here I was sure that the cathedral was the S. Marco church, but later I heard that the cathedral was the church of S. Pietro di Castello.

He was asked: why have you decided to leave your parish church and go to the cathedral?

[...]

He was asked if the custom in his country was to receive communion in the parish church or in the cathedral.

[Gomez] *answered*: Normally in the parish church.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Ibid., 235: “Gli fo detto: Non è verissimile che voi che sete homo doto et intelligente vi siate confessato da un frate a caso non conosciuto da voi perhò, per chiarir la giustitia dela verità, havendo deto che conossereste questo frate che vi confessò, fate ogni opera de ritrovarlo”.

⁹⁷ Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition*, 83.

⁹⁸ For the Inquisitor’s question see, n. 94; Processi (1548 – 1560), 234 – 35: “respose: Signor sì, ma nela mia patria chi non se comunica nela sua parochia se puol legitimamente comunicar ala giesia cathedral et satisfà a l’obligo soprascritto. Et perhò io essendo qui forestiero me son persuaso che San Marco fusse la giesia cathedral, ma ho poi inteso che la giesia de San Piero de Castelo è la cathedral. Domandato perchè havete così eletto di lassar la parochia vostra e andar ala giesia cathedral? [...]

On 10 September 1555, the tribunal concluded the proceedings and acquitted Duarte Gomez of the accusations of crypto-Judaism. Earlier, on 31 August, Gomez had presented to the tribunal a text with ten articles about his Christian conduct and the names of witnesses who were eager to testify for his defense.⁹⁹ Some of those witnesses were examined by the Inquisitor on the 3rd and 5th September. The Inquisitor questioned the witnesses exactly on the articles presented by Gomez without any additional questions.¹⁰⁰ On 2 September, the Inquisitor of Ferrara sent to the Venetian tribunal documents with testimonies given in Ferrara by other witnesses for the defense.¹⁰¹

In September, Agostinho Enrichez appeared before the Venetian tribunal. He claimed that he had been in Ferrara and an illness had prevented him from presenting himself.¹⁰² The Inquisitor did not call him for interrogation. Earlier the Inquisitor had received from the Inquisitor of Ferrara documents with testimonies in favour of Enrichez. Enrichez had asked the Inquisitor to call some witnesses who would give evidence for his Christian conduct.¹⁰³ It seems that the Venetian Inquisition having considered the results of the trial against Duarte Gomez and the depositions from Ferrara decided not to investigate Enrichez. Overall, these later hearings appear to have weighed little. It was the two interrogations of Gomez that had convinced the tribunal.

Proceedings after the Decree of 1556: Persecution and Coercive Reconciliation

At the end of September 1570, a man, called Enrichez, who had earlier been arrested by the Council of Ten, was handed over to the Inquisition. The incident took place at a critical juncture; Venice was involved in the war of Cyprus and Lepanto. In the

Domandato se nela sua patria era solito comunicarsi ala parochia over al domo, respose: Ala parochia ordinariamente”.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 236; Processi (1561 – 1570), 89 – 91.

¹⁰⁰ Processi (1548 – 1560), 237 – 44; see the changing pattern in the Ribiera case, 103.

¹⁰¹ Processi (1561 – 1570), 79 – 89.

¹⁰² Processi (1548 – 1560), 246.

¹⁰³ Processi (1561 – 1570), 92 – 6.

Inquisition, the nuncio Giovanni Facchinetti (1566 – 73) pressed for a harder stance on heresy.¹⁰⁴ On 5 October, the man was brought before the tribunal. In the preliminary questions, the arrested man responded that his name was Abraam and he was also known as Righetto. He declared that he was not a Christian but Jew. As the Inquisitor asked him why the Council of Ten handed him over to the Holy Office, Righetto responded that he had no idea and that he had never heard of Jews appearing in the Inquisition.¹⁰⁵

Immediately the Inquisitor, the Dominican Aurelio Schilini da Brescia (1569 – 74), enquired into the places that Righetto had visited in the last ten years. To Righetto's general response that he had been in Spain, the Inquisitor insisted on his naming the places he had visited in Spain and Portugal. The examination of Righetto's visit to Spain included details such as the purpose of his travel, the name of Righetto's debtor in Spain, the sum of the debt and the sum that Righetto managed to get back.¹⁰⁶

The next set of questions concerned Righetto and his family's background. Righetto was asked where he had been born. Of particular importance was the birthplace of Righetto's father and when he had departed from Spain.¹⁰⁷ The Inquisitor directed a next set of questions towards Righetto's presence in Florence. His presence in Florence was examined in relation to his religious conduct there: whether he had lived as a Jew or a Christian. Righetto carefully did not give any answer but asked for clarification on the meaning of "living in the Christian manner".¹⁰⁸ The Inquisitor responded to Righetto's request: "Living in the manner of Christians is the practice of going to churches, hearing Mass, going to confession,

¹⁰⁴ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 28 – 9; Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, 185 – 86.

¹⁰⁵ Processi (1570 – 1572), 38 – 9; the trial of Righetto has been analysed with particular reference to Venice's foreign relations in Pullan, "A Ship with Two Rudders", 25 – 58; on another occasion, in 1582, the Council of Ten handed over to the Inquisition Giovanni Valetta, in the fear of being a Turkish spy: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 98.

¹⁰⁶ Processi (1570 – 1572), 39 – 40: "Interrogatus da diece anni in qua ove lui ha habitato"; "Ei dictum quanto tempo precise egli ha dimorato in Spagna et che'l nomini particolarmente le città et luoghi ove lui è stato in Spagna"; "Interrogatus con chi lui alloggiava in Lisbona"; "Interrogatus a che effetto lui è andato in Spagna"; "Ei dicto che'l nomini questo suo debitore"; "Interrogatus quanti danari doveva haver dal quel Ballas".

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 40: "Dove sete nato?"; "Interrogatus quanti anni sono che è morto suo padre et che facoltà gli lasciò et donde nacque detto suo padre"; "Interrogatus quanti anni era che suo padre venne di Portogallo avanti che morisse".

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.: Interrogatus quanti anni egli è stato in Fiorenze, respondit: Son stato infinite volte ma non mi son mai fermato per stanza. Ei dicto se in Fiorenza egli viveva alla hebrea opur alla christiana, respondit: Che cosa intendete viver alla christiana?"

taking holy water and other such things, as is the custom of Christians".¹⁰⁹ Righetto responded: "I lived in the Jewish manner, but sometimes I have gone to churches and many times I have drunk and eaten with Christians because of the accursed game". The Inquisitor asked him to respond explicitly whether he had been to Mass as a Christian.¹¹⁰ The interrogation continued with questions about Righetto's adherence to Judaism: "in Florence, had he visited the synagogue?"¹¹¹ On outward conformity: "in Florence, was he known as a Jew or Christian?"¹¹² The Inquisitor appeared to have been aware of Righetto's conduct in Florence and a quarrel he had been embroiled in.¹¹³ Though Righetto claimed that the quarrel was about a woman, called Nena, the Inquisitor suspected that the cause was different and indicative of Righetto's religious identity: "He was asked if he came to blows because the said Spaniard called him a Jew and for this reason, as he became offended, he got his sword to pay back the offence that he is not a Jew".¹¹⁴ To this speculation Righetto replied that the row had to do only with Nena and that he would not be offended if someone called him a Jew.

On 7 October 1570, the Inquisition received the Spanish Diogo Ortiz de Vera's testimony. The Inquisitor just asked the witness whether he knew one Enrichez, who called himself Righetto among the Jews and Enrichez Nuno among the Spanish, and let the witness give a full account of his acquaintance with Righetto.¹¹⁵ Ortiz de Vera described in detail Righetto as a Christian but he also added that "he was of those Jews who were expelled from Spain". Seemingly Ortiz de Vera had earlier denounced Righetto to the Heads of the Council of Ten.¹¹⁶

After the two initial interrogations, the Inquisitor in Venice wrote to the Inquisitor of Ferrara, Pietro da Rimini to obtain information on Righetto. Da

¹⁰⁹ Translated in Pullan, "A Ship with Two Rudders", 47, n.87

¹¹⁰ Processi (1570 – 1572), 41: "Respondit: Io viveva alla hebrea, ma son ben passato per le chiese alle volte et mangiato et bevuto molte volte con Christiani et mangiava et beveva con Christiani per causa del maledetto giuoco. Interrogatus che lui risponda formalmente se lui è stato alla messa come christiano".

¹¹¹ Ibid.: "Ei dicto se in Fiorenza lui andava alla sinagoga di Hebrei".

¹¹² Ibid.: "Interrogatus se egli era reputato in Fiorenza per hebreo opur per christiano".

¹¹³ Ibid.: "Interrogatus se in Fiorenza lui ha havuto costione con alcuno".

¹¹⁴ Ibid.: "Interrogatus se lui venne alle mani perchè il detto spagnuolo li havesse detto hebreo et che perciò esso costituito si resentite et messe mano alla spada per combatter questa querela di non esser giudeo".

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 42: "Et interrogatus si egli conosce un Enriches chiamato Righetto tra gli Hebrei et, tra Spagnuoli, Enrico Gnugnes".

¹¹⁶ Processi, Appendici, 44.

Rimini's reply-letter of 13 November 1570 indicates that the Inquisitor of Venice sought information on Righetto's birthplace and his family background. In this letter the Inquisitor of Ferrara gave some first indications that Righetto had not been born in Ferrara but said that he had not been able to find the actual place of birth.¹¹⁷ On 7 December 1570, the Inquisitor of Ferrara sent a second letter. That time the Inquisitor confirmed that some witnesses had testified that Righetto had not been born in Ferrara, and he apologised for not having been able to carry out his research properly because of recent earthquakes that had hit Ferrara. The series of letters from the Inquisitor of Ferrara continued and on 1 March 1571, the Inquisitor of Venice was informed about Righetto's financial condition.¹¹⁸

On 24 March 1571, the Inquisition unexpectedly received notification by its bailiff Biasio Furlan that a man held in the Council of Ten's prison had offered to give information about Righetto.¹¹⁹ Some days later, a man called Giovanni Antonio Vicinio appeared before the tribunal. Vicinio testified that he had obtained information from Righetto himself. The witness offered the Inquisitor what he had sought to establish already from the beginning of the trial, that Righetto had been born in Spain. The Inquisitor's additional questions aimed at uncovering the life of Righetto and his family.¹²⁰ The Inquisitor also engaged in a kind of historical discussion with the witness on the Edict of expulsion of the Jews from Spain: "He was asked if he knows when the Edict, by which the Jews were not allowed to stay in Spain was released".¹²¹ This discussion can be seen as a test on behalf of the Inquisition in order to examine the witness's reliability. But it was also a movement of coming closer to a witness, who appeared to have been so well informed.

¹¹⁷ Processi (1570 – 1572), 44: "Insino ad hora truovo solo che egli non è nato in Ferrara, ma però non sano ove sia nato".

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 45 – 6; 46 – 9.

¹¹⁹ At that time Righetto was also held in the prisons of the Council of Ten in the Ducal Palace, perhaps due to the authorities' suspicion of Righetto's alleged spying. Usually, the Inquisition, before obtaining its own prisons after 1580, used the debtors' prisons [*casoni*] at S. Giovanni in Bragora and occasionally the state prisons. On Venice's prisons, G. Scarabello, "La pena del carcere. Aspetti della condizione carceraria a Venezia nei secoli xvi – xviii: L'assistenza e l'associazionismo", in Cozzi, *Stato, Società e Giustizia*, 319 – 26. It seems that it was not unusual for prisoners to denounce fellow prisoners for heresy to the Inquisition. On another occasion in 1588 Giovanni Battista Capponi was accused by other prisoners: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 47;

¹²⁰ Processi (1570 – 1572), 50: "Interrogatus che età haveva il detto Abraam quando habitava in Lisbona,"; "Interrogatus se'l sa che'l padre di detto Abraam, detto Henrico Nugnes, sia stato christiano,"; "Interrogatus se'l sa il tempo della natività di esso Abraam".

¹²¹ Ibid.: "Interrogatus se sa de che tempo fusse fatto l'editto in Spagna che Hebrei non potessero habitare".

Subsequently, at his own initiative, Vicinio went on to give additional information on Righetto's conduct.

As the witness testified that Righetto had told him that Christ was a false prophet, the Inquisitor did not miss the chance to examine other potential blasphemies that Righetto might have uttered, asking whether "He has said that Our Saviour was a bad person and he died as a bad person deserved".¹²² The Inquisitor sought to examine blasphemies that he thought a Jew might have said or that were widely attributed to Jews. Among the documents I have examined, this kind of questions was not common for the Inquisitors. In general, the Inquisitor allowed the witness to give his account and asked questions that might shed light on some points of the testimony. Rarely did the Inquisitors enquire into alleged blasphemies that the accused person might have uttered. This hypothetical question can be seen as an attempt to extract pieces of information that the witness might have neglected to give. A harder approach was underway here and the Inquisitor was determined not to leave anything unexplored.

After that deposition the tribunal called Righetto for a second session on 4 April 1571. Righetto released limited information and he mostly said that he was unable to give answers to the Inquisitor's questions. In general, Righetto claimed that he was not aware of issues relating to his family's past. Insisting that he had been born in Ferrara, Righetto attempted to distance his personal story from that of his family.¹²³

The Inquisitor however was well aware of the value of evidence he had earlier obtained and was ready to use it in many ways. The Inquisitor was prepared for the style of interrogation he would follow and sought to give the impression that Righetto did not have much latitude. A main set of questions concerned the past of Righetto's father. The last question was about his father's children. As Righetto testified about his brothers, the Inquisitor used the information that he had obtained from Ferrara on the existence of a brother called Girolamo. The Inquisitor went on to verify whether Righetto's brother had died in Ferrara and whether he had bequeathed

¹²² Ibid., 51: "Interrogatus si ha detto che'l Salvator Nostro fusse stato un tristo et che habbia fatto la morte che meritasse un tristo".

¹²³ See for instance the following dialogues, *ibid.*, 52: "Interrogatus se l'ha mai inteso che suo padre habbia habitato in Fiandra, respondit: Io non ne so render conto. Ei dictum che questa cosa è poco

his property to his mother.¹²⁴ Following the usual encircling and step-by step tactic for obtaining secondary-status evidence,¹²⁵ after a set of questions on Righetto's interrogations before the Heads of the Council of Ten, the Inquisitor returned to Righetto's brother Girolamo. He pointed out that Righetto had preferred to call his brother by his Jewish name, Senior and not the Christian, Girolamo: "For what reason when earlier as you talked about your brothers' names, and naming the elder did you wish rather quickly to specify his Jewish name, that is Senior, rather than his Christian name, that is Hieronimo?"¹²⁶ The verification of the use of the names constituted for the Inquisitor evidence that shaped religious identities.

A set of questions on the name of Righetto's brother followed, leading on from Righetto's responses each time. As Righetto claimed that he had heard his brother called Senior at home, the Inquisitor asked: "If you have heard only the name Senior, why did you say that he was called Hieronimo?"¹²⁷ In subsequent questions, the Inquisitor constantly and deliberately referred to Righetto's brother as Girolamo. Finally, as the result of earlier discourse, the Inquisitor posed a question that concluded his encircling tactic and aimed to give a shape to Righetto's family background:

Your brother Hieronimo left all his property, as you stated above, to your mother Violante. But how could your mother, if she was as you say a Jewess, have the benefit of his estate when Hieronimo died a Christian, since a Jew cannot succeed to the property of a Christian, either *ex testamento* or *ab intestato*?¹²⁸

The argument that the Inquisitor put forward combined a legal issue with the tricky use of the nature of Girolamo's name, which denoted that Righetto's brother died as a Christian. The interrogation about Girolamo's religious identity continued with questions on the name's nature: "Is the name Hieronimo in use among the Jews?";

verisimile et che però che'l debba rispondere et dir la verità, respondit: Io non so render conto di mio padre"; 53: "Interrogatus dove è nata sua madre, respondit nescire".

¹²⁴ Ibid, 53: "Ei dictum si l'ha havuto un fratello che habbia havuto nome Hieronimo"; "Interrogatus se Hieronimo suo fratello fece testamento avanti la sua morte"; "Interrogatus se sa o si ha inteso a dir che Hieronimo beneficiasse sua madre per il testamento".

¹²⁵ See above, 72 – 3.

¹²⁶ Processi (1570 – 1572), 54: "Ei dictum: Per che causa specificando voi di sopra al nome di vostri fratelli et nominando il maggiore havete voluto più presto specificar il nome hebreo, cioè Senior, che il nome christiano, cioè Hieronimo?"

¹²⁷ Ibid.: "Ei dictum: Se non l'havete sentito nominar se non Senior, perchè havete detto che'l nomeva Hieronimo?"

“Do the Christians use this name Hieronimo?”; “As you associate with Christians, have you heard several Christians to be called by this name?”¹²⁹

After a while the Inquisitor opened a new set of questions concerning the presence of Jews in Spain. As with the question on Girolamo’s name, Righetto’s answer to an initial and seemingly neutral question was developed into a subsequent question that in combination with earlier evidence, aimed at delineating religious identities:

He was asked if Jews are allowed to stay in Spain.

[*Righetto*] *answered*: No sir, as far as I have heard it said, but I do not have any specific knowledge about it.

He was asked if the Jews are not allowed to stay in Spain, how had his father and mother been in Spain if they were not Christians but Jews.

[*Righetto*] *answered*: I do not know how to account for this.

He was asked: your father and mother being Christians, how is it possible that you born of them are not baptised and a Christian?¹³⁰

In mid April 1571, the Inquisition obtained new information on Righetto and his family. The Inquisitor of Ferrara sent a copy of Girolamo’s testament and copies of witnesses’ depositions.¹³¹ Additionally, the bishop of Vicenza, Matteo Priuli, who had served as nuncio in Portugal from 1542 to 1548 informed the Inquisition that he had met Nunez Henrique Enriches and Nuno Henrique Enriches Nunes, Righetto’s uncle and father, in Lisbon. Priuli’s letter explained the situation of New Christians in Portugal, the departure of more than a hundred families from there and the problems which emerged in Venice from the presence of New Christians. The bishop wrote that those who had been born in Portugal had also received baptism but many New Christians had been accused of getting circumcised secretly after the baptism. Priuli suggested that the Inquisitor wrote to the officials of the Holy Office in Lisbon

¹²⁸ Translated in Pullan, “A Ship with Two Rudders”, 38, n. 56.

¹²⁹ Processi (1570 – 1572), 55: “Interrogatus se’ nome di Hieronimo si usa tra Hebrei”; “Interrogatus si se usa tra Christiani questo nome di Hieronimo”; “Ei dictum: Per la pratica ch’havete havuto tra Christiani, havete sentito a nominar diversi Christiani di questo nome?”

¹³⁰ Ibid.: “Interrogatus se Hebrei possono habitar in Spagna, respondit: Per quel che ho sentito a dir non, signor, ma non lo so di scientia. Interrogatus se Hebrei non possono star in Spagna, come dunque sono stati suo padre et sua madre in Spagna se non erano Christiani ma Hebrei, respondit: Mi non so render conto di questo. Ei dictum: Essendo stati tuo padre et tua madre Christiani, come è possibile che tu, essendo nato di loro non sii stato battizzato et non sii christiano”.

¹³¹ Among the hearings involving Judaizers, Righetto’s case was the first where the Inquisition collaborated with tribunals of other cities: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 55.

for additional evidence.¹³² Probably motivated by Priuli's comments on the circumcision of New Christians, the Inquisitor ordered the inspection of Righetto's circumcision. The expert, who examined the circumcision, expressed his doubt and suggested that the Inquisition consulted two other experts, the physicians Michele Pagiarin and Leonardo Fioravanti. Later, these two confirmed that Righetto had been circumcised.¹³³

In late May, Righetto sent a letter to the Inquisition asking the tribunal to examine witnesses in Ferrara who would confirm his birth there. In the letter, taking advantage of the inspection of his circumcision, Righetto put forward arguments for his Jewishness. Righetto, as he had also done at the interrogations, admitted presenting himself as a Christian in several countries he had visited, "as an audacious and restless young man who used to change places." But he argued that this misconduct did not prove him a Christian. Outward conformity to one religion did not mean spiritual participation and actual adherence: "...because the fact of living among Christians bearing the name of Christian does not prove anything of the sort". He argued that his case was not the only one: "Time and time again we have seen Christians in the Levant call themselves by Turkish names and live among Turks for personal reasons..." Righetto's main argument was that admission to a religion was marked only by the sacramental admission. And as the inspection of the circumcision had proved, his adherence to Judaism was undisputable. Righetto argued that everyone had to undergo a rite of passage in order to adhere to a religion truly. For this reason Christians lived in the guise of Muslims but "without undergoing circumcision or committing those actions by which one accepts the faith of Islam, and then they return to Christianity when they come back home". Similarly, the circumcision manifested Righetto's Jewishness and his religious identity could be challenged only by a possible demonstration of baptism:

The full proof that one is a Jew, which derives from living as a Jew and from circumcision, is not a thing that can be overturned by mere hints, conjectures and other signs – indeed, not by anything less than a full and perfect proof that clearly and manifestly demonstrates baptism.¹³⁴

¹³² Processi (1570 – 1572), 57 – 64; see also Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 122.

¹³³ Processi (1570 – 1572), 65.

¹³⁴ All translations from Pullan, "A Ship with Two Rudders", 47.

The defence tactic advanced in Righetto's petition can be seen in conjunction with some Portuguese Jews' attempts in Ferrara to find witnesses who would confirm Righetto's birth in Ferrara.¹³⁵

On 4 August 1571, the third interrogation of Righetto took place. This session had much in common with the second, but was more detailed. The Inquisitor avoided any reference to Righetto's baptism and birthplace. The Inquisitor was now mostly interested in reconstructing the story of Righetto's family. This strategy was to reach a conclusion about Righetto's birth through the details of his family's story. Additionally, taking Righetto's dissimulation as a starting point, the Inquisitor sought to examine the family as one having been divided between Christianity and Judaism. Within this context, the Inquisitor questioned whether Righetto's father had ever returned to Portugal, asked whether his uncle lived in Venice as a Christian and in Ferrara as a Jew, and whether Righetto's brothers used other names apart from their Jewish ones. Compared to the cases discussed earlier, a clear pattern of inquisitorial discourse emerges; the accused person's family past became gradually of more importance and weighed heavier against him/her.¹³⁶

Through Righetto's interrogation, the Inquisitor apparently obtained a clearer picture of crypto-Jews' contacts, network and movements in cities of Italy or Spain. It was indicative the way the Inquisitor formulated questions on Nunez Henrique Enrichez's (Righetto's uncle) conduct in Venice and Ferrara, asking if his uncle lived as a Christian in Venice; if his uncle lived as a Jew in Ferrara.¹³⁷ Similarly, crypto-Jews' relations with Christians came under examination. The Inquisitor questioned Righetto over his travel back to Iberia and how he could trust that his debtor there would not accuse him to the authorities: "You have said that you had been to Portugal to get back your debts from the said Odoardo; how did you trust being a Jew to go to Portugal in order to get back your money from a Christian and you weren't afraid of being denounced by him?"¹³⁸ Righetto's answer attempted to challenge the

¹³⁵ Processi (1570 – 1572), 67 – 8, 70 – 3.

¹³⁶ See 78 – 80; see also, 107, 110.

¹³⁷ Processi (1570 – 1572), 76: "Interrogatus se sa che suo zio habbia vivesto in Venetia da christiano,"; "Interrogatus se in Ferrara suo zio viveva alla hebrea".

¹³⁸ Ibid., 76 – 7: "Ei dictum: Havete detto nel vostro costituito di esser stato in Portogallo per scuoder il vostro credito che havevi con il detto Odoardo, come vi havete fidato di andar in Portogallo essendo hebreo per scuoder danari da un christiano et non havete temuto di esser accusato da lui?"

Inquisitor's argument that defined the policy of Christian-Jewish separateness: "By using courtesy and asking [money] as an act of charity, why should I be afraid of being denounced?"¹³⁹

For the Inquisitor the interrogation continued to serve as a learning process on the nature of crypto-Judaism. Righetto explained that his father and uncle had departed from Venice as other Marranos had done too, because the Venetian government had decreed that the Marranos should leave the city unless they wanted to practise Judaism and live in the Ghetto (in all probability, he referred to the ban of 1550).¹⁴⁰ By this interpretation of Marranism, Righetto pointed once again to himself; he claimed that the Marranos' only link with the Christian world was the sharing the same urban space with Christians. This proximity with Christians did not mean any kind of relations to Christianity. It was only an outward dissimulation. The only religious orientation of Marranos could be towards Judaism. Therefore Marranos could live only as Jews in the Ghetto; or live in the Christian guise beside Christians but without practising Christianity. To this one-dimensional presentation of Marranism, the Inquisitor became alarmed and cautious: "Therefore all those Marranos, who wear the black hat and have not been suspected by us Christians of judaizing, live as Jews?"¹⁴¹ Righetto neither confirmed nor denied his earlier statement but simply gave a more ambiguous answer pointing again to the ambiguity of religious identities: "I am surprised at this question. How can I be aware of what anyone is doing privately at home?"¹⁴²

On 18 September 1571, the tribunal decided to ask information on Righetto's birth and baptism from the Inquisition in Lisbon. Earlier the tribunal had received copies of the interrogation of the Portuguese physician Emanuel Rocca in the Rome Inquisition. Though the witness was not aware of Righetto's birthplace, he testified

¹³⁹ Ibid., 77: "Havendogli io usato cortesia et domandandoli come per elemosina, perchè doveva io temer che mi accusasse?"

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 78: "Et subiunxit ex se: La causa che si partite de qua, per quanto ho inteso, fu perchè mio zio si partì da Venetia et altri fu per una parte del dominio, che non voleva che li Marani stessero fuori di ghetto, ma che se volevano viver alla hebrea, andassero in ghetto altramente andassero fuori della città".

¹⁴¹ Ibid.: "Ei dictum: Dunque tutti quelli Marani che portavano la baretta negra et non erano conosciuti da noi christiani che hebraisassero, vivevano come Hebrei?"; note the inquisitorial personalisation in "noi".

¹⁴² Processi (1570 – 1572), 78: "Mi maraviglio di questa dimanda. Che poss'io saper quello che si faceva nelle case private di ciascuno?"

that Righetto's father and uncle had lived as Christians in Lisbon.¹⁴³ But in September 1571, suspicions arose that Righetto sought to bribe the prison guards to escape. Righetto finally escaped from the prison in the Ducal Palace, taking advantage of the turmoil caused by the news of the victory in Lepanto. Later, with the Duke of Ferrara's cooperation, Righetto was found there and transferred back to Venice at the beginning of February 1572.

Soon after his arrest, on 15 February 1572, Righetto appeared for a fourth time before the Inquisition. During this session, the questions again concerned Righetto's father and his birth. But in the meantime, the tribunal had obtained copies of a part of Righetto's interrogation before the Heads of the Council of Ten on 21 June 1570, and the Inquisitor cross-examined Righetto's replies. The Inquisitor asked Righetto whether the Heads had asked him about the place of his birth. In the interrogation before the Heads, Righetto had answered to an ambiguous question that he had been born in Spain. Righetto was well aware of the question and his reply and immediately went on to argue that his reply was the result of misconception. He claimed his intention was to say that his father had been born in Spain. But the Inquisitor was determined to uncover the truth behind Righetto's reply and to point out the inconsistency. As Righetto earlier had claimed that he was unaware of his father's birthplace the Inquisitor did not miss the opportunity to push Righetto to admit that he had been born in Spain: "Since you have earlier said that you don't know where your father was born, it is concluded that the answer [ie you had given to the Heads] concerned yourself".¹⁴⁴

Righetto tried to undermine the validity of the copy of his interrogation arguing that it did not follow the actual sequence of the interrogation, but that the way the questions and answers had been modified in the copy distorted the interrogation. Righetto asked to see the original interrogation document but Pietro Venier, one of the lay deputies, argued that the copy had been made from the original document in his presence, that this had already been archived in the Council of Ten, and there was no reason to take the trouble to extract the document.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Ibid., 85 – 90.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 95: "Ei dictum: Perchè dunque havete detto di sopra de non saper dove sia nato vostro padre, non sapendo dunque voi dove sia nato vostro padre seguita che la risposta si die referir a voi".

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 96: This was one of the rare cases where an intervention by the lay deputies was recorded, even in an indirect summary form.

On 12 April 1572, the Spanish ambassador informed the Inquisition that he had received from Portugal testimonies concerning Righetto.¹⁴⁶ On 29 May 1572, Righetto appeared before the Inquisition for a fifth time. Now the interrogation focused on Righetto himself and especially his travel to Spain. The Inquisitor was determined to use the information provided by the Inquisition in Portugal. The Inquisitor's questions were formulated so that he could verify whether any of Righetto's answers corresponded to the depositions of witnesses from Portugal. Among the depositions, the Inquisitor mainly focused on those made by Alvaro de Caçeres, who claimed he had associated with Righetto in the Inquisition prison in Evora, and had been exhorted to become a Jew. The Inquisitor sought to verify whether Righetto had discussed religious issues with De Caçeres. Righetto denied having any discussion but later he agreed that he had met a man called Manuel Caldeira, who was also among the witnesses examined in Lisbon. The Inquisitor for the first time urged Righetto to tell the truth and informed him that the Inquisition not only had reached the conclusion that he had been born in Lisbon but also held proofs of his birthplace. The Inquisitor exhorted Righetto to acknowledge and abjure his offence of apostasy otherwise the tribunal would proceed against him regarding him an impenitent apostate.¹⁴⁷

Righetto continued to maintain that he had been born and brought up into a Jewish family, and asked the tribunal to provide copies of the proceedings in order to prepare his defence. The tribunal in agreement with the lay deputies decided to conclude the trial. The lay deputies informed Righetto that he would have the opportunity to prepare his defence, which should take into account that

the Holy Office has definitely concluded that he was born in Portugal, in Lisbon, living there as a Christian and consequently he received baptism; the Holy Office recognises

¹⁴⁶ Processi (1570 – 1572), 97 – 124; the investigation in Portugal was carried out by order of Cardinal Infante, Henrique d'Aviz. There was seemingly some cooperation between the Spanish and the Portuguese authorities on matters of the Holy Office even before the Spanish conquest of Portugal in 1580: H. C. Lea, *A History of the Inquisition in Spain*, 4 vols. (New York and London, 1906 – 7), 1: 184, 3: 232.

¹⁴⁷ Processi (1570 – 1572), 127 – 28: "Allhora li fu detto: Enriches, advertite che il Santo Officio ha havuto legitime prove che voi sete nato in Lisbona et che vostro padre et vostro zio vivevano christianamente, andando alle chiese et si partirno per Fiandra et fosti condotto via da vostro padre in età de anni nuove fino alli 12, di modo che, essendo voi nato in Spagna, voi sete stato battezzato. Però vi si essorta a cognoscer l'error vostro et abgiurar la vostra apostasia nella quale sete incorso, perchè in questo modo il Santo Officio vi abbraccerà in charità, altramenti si procederà contra di voi come aportata pertinace et impenitente".

that the Jews are not tolerated in Portugal and that everyone born there receives baptism, and if any secretly adheres to Judaism they are punished severely as you are going to be punished too, unless you recognise [your error].¹⁴⁸

On 7 June 1572 the tribunal officially announced that the proceedings against Righetto were concluded, and he was given eight days to prepare his defence.

On 11 September 1572, Benedetto Barisello, Righetto's lawyer appointed by the Inquisition,¹⁴⁹ presented documents containing Righetto's defence arguments. The documents comprised some Bulls and extracts from the *Historia Hebreorum Portugensium* and the *Cronica* of the king Manoel. The defence followed two strands: on the one hand, it was argued that Righetto's baptism could not be proved as the registers of the Maddalena parish in Lisbon were lost.¹⁵⁰ It was further argued that in 1497 the king of Portugal had conceded that for thirty years the Jews would be free from any investigation into their religious conduct and that in their turn, the Jews had promised that after that period they would become Christians. Thus, according to the defence argument, during that period many Jews did not baptise their children.¹⁵¹ Secondly arguments confronted the tribunal's view that Righetto had been baptised. Righetto and his advocate attempted to show that Paul IV's decree was not valid because it did not accord with the policy that his predecessors, Paul III and Giulio III, had followed towards Portuguese Jews of New Christian origin in the Papal State. Additionally, the decree was not in accordance with the policies followed by Charles V and the Venetian Senate, who offered the Jews the possibility to leave with their property.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 128: "Ei dictum: Li signori clarissimi assistenti intervengono qua de ordine dell'eccellentissimo Consiglio di X, [...] che a lui [i.e. Righetto] non mancherà difese, che dica i testimoni che lui intende di voler far essaminare, [...] et perchè lo possa far più fondatamente se li dise che il Santo Officio ha per provato concludentemente che egli è nato in Portogallo, in Lisbona, et vivuto secondo il rito christiano et consecuentemente battezzato et che il Santo Officio ha per costante che in Portogallo non sono tollerati Hebrei ma quelli che vi nascano tutti si batteggiano et se ben alcuno poi secretamente si danno al Giudaismo sono severamente castigati come sarete anchora voi se non vi reconoscerete".

¹⁴⁹ On the appointment of lawyers in the Inquisition, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 111; Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 136 – 40.

¹⁵⁰ Processi (1570 – 1572), 147.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 138; on King Manoel's policy on New Christians, S. Haliczer, "The First Holocaust: The Inquisition and the Converted Jews of Spain and Portugal", in *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, ed. S. Haliczer (London and Sydney, 1987), 11.

¹⁵² Processi (1570 – 1572), 140 – 43.

On 2 November 1572, the tribunal informed Righetto that it would judge him an apostate and he had to abjure his apostasy. But though Righetto was given three days to decide whether he wanted to abjure, which showed the Inquisition wanted to conclude the trial and give the verdict, several months later, in June 1573, some Jews requested medical care for Righetto who was ill in the prison. The tribunal's delay in announcing its verdict is difficult to explain. In August 1573 Righetto was still asking the tribunal to end his trial and detention.¹⁵³ The trial against Righetto unexpectedly ended in late August, when Biasio Furlan, an official of the Inquisition, informed the tribunal that Righetto had escaped from the prison.¹⁵⁴

Righetto's trial was the unique case where an accused was prosecuted for his crypto-Jewish conduct outside Venice.¹⁵⁵ Though the Venetian Inquisition never announced its verdict, since Righetto succeeded in escaping, the case marks a turning point in the tribunal's activities against crypto-Jews; the tribunal rigorously followed Paul IV's decree and strove throughout the trial to gather that piece of evidence, that is Righetto's birthplace, that would open the way for the decree's implementation. The suspicion over Righetto's New Christian origin had been aroused from the beginning. Correspondence between the Venetian Inquisition and Rome was increasing.¹⁵⁶ On 18 July 1571, after Righetto's first two interrogations, the nuncio Facchinetti informed Cardinal Rusticucci in Rome about Righetto, whom he called "the Marrano":

He [Righetto] says that he was born in Ferrara, but from information that has appeared in the proceeding, I do not believe that it is true. His father and an uncle of his departed from Portugal so that they could judaize and I believe that he was born there [Portugal], and if this is true, needless to say that he has received baptism, because for fear of the Inquisition, they [Righetto's parents] would not have dared not to baptise him. I am on the track of his birth [...] I am convinced that he is a Marrano.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Ibid., 151 – 2.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 153.

¹⁵⁵ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 123.

¹⁵⁶ Davidson, "Rome and the Venetian Inquisition", 25.

¹⁵⁷ Processi, Appendici, 44 – 5: "Dice d'esser nato in Ferrara ma, per quel che io posso raccogliere d'alcune informazioni che son nel processo, non credo che sia vero. Il padre et un zio suo partimo di Portugallo per poter giudaizzare et tengo che egli nascesse là et, se questo è, bisogna dire che sia battezzato perché per dubbio dell'Inquisitione non havriano osato lasiar di farlo battezzato. Io son dietro per verificare questo nascimento [...] Nell'animo mio credo certo che sia marano"; on Facchinetti's aggressive attitudes, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 28; on Righetto as the Marrano type, who regarded Catholicism and Judaism as mere protective skins, although he was more inclined to

The new aggressive stance that the Inquisition adopted in the 1570s, is also substantiated by the Inquisitor's efforts during the trial of Gaspar Ribiera, started in 1579. The entire proceedings against Ribiera is not necessarily indicative of the Inquisition's new approach, as Ribiera, who was posthumously condemned for judaizing, never claimed during the trial that he had lived as a Jew; he defended his Christian conduct, although he did not convince the tribunal, which regarded as a sign of crypto-Judaism that Ribiera had consented to his son's marriage to the Jewess Alumbra. However, it was the way the Inquisitor interrogated the witnesses cited for Ribiera's defence which illustrates the new harsher stance. Contrary to the examination that Agostinho Enrichez's defence witnesses underwent in 1555,¹⁵⁸ the witnesses during the *Processus ad defensam Gasparis Ribeira*, were not interrogated only on the articles presented by the accused as proofs of his innocence. At the beginning of the interrogation, the Inquisitor Giovanni Battista da Milano (1578 – 81) sought to influence the witnesses before examining them on the articles of defence, by suggestively asking ex officio what would be their opinion of someone who had married his son to a Jewess, whether they had heard that the Portuguese who secretly lived as Jews were called Marranos and whether they had heard Ribiera being called the "Marrano".¹⁵⁹

However, it is the next case that clearly illustrates the Inquisition's new stance and the developments that were underway. On 12 October 1585, the Inquisition arrested members of the De Nis household from the S. Leonardo parish, after testimonies

Judaism, *ibid.*, 217 – 20; Marranos, such as Righetto or Francisco Olivier (see above, 63 – 4), suggest that a clear classification of Marranos is not easy. On Marrano types: J. Faur, "Four Classes of *Conversos*: A Typological Study", *Revue des Études juives*, 149 (1990): 113 – 24.

¹⁵⁸ See above, 89.

¹⁵⁹ *Processi* (1579 – 1586), 291: "Ei dictum in che opinione esso habbia uno apparentemente christiano che consentisse anzi trattasse et desse per moglie d'un suo figliolo una hebreia"; 294: "Ei dictum se lui ha inteso dire che i Portoghesi che vanno a far de casa loro per la maggior parte sono Christiani in apparentia e in effetto Iudei et però si chiamano Marani"; 297: "Ei dictum se per la contrata de detta chiesa de Santa Maria Formosa, parlandose de deto Gaspare, se gli diceva marano o il marano"; on Ribiera, Pullan, "The Inquisition and the Jews", 207 – 31; *idem*, *The Jews of Europe*, 230 – 41; but also, Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 268 – 69; *idem*, "Early Modern Italian Confraternities: Inclusion and Exclusion", *Historiein*, 2 (2000): 73, which also reproduces Anthony Molho's view on the case; from a different perspective on the case see 38 – 9, 42 – 5, 49 – 51, 54, 55.

heard from the end of September till 8 of October.¹⁶⁰ It was the first time that the Venetian Inquisition received denunciations and proceeded against a whole family of alleged crypto-Jews. The Inquisition made selective arrests aiming at separating the household. It arrested two servants, Francisco Dies, alias Isaac, and the dark-skinned Luna, alias Felipa, the head of the household, Felipe de Nis, alias Salomon Marco, and his nephew, Felipe de Nis, alias Isaac Marco. Felipe de Nis senior's wife and his two children remained free with another servant, Esperança, alias Catarina, alias Lianor.

The first interrogations took place on the day of the arrests. The two servants, first Luna and later Francisco came for examination. The tribunal chose to examine the two suspects who were not family members, considering that servants might have been the weakest links in the crypto-Jewish group and consequently the easiest persons to handle. They might give crucial information early in the investigation. In the interrogations of Luna and Francisco, Angelo Mirabino, an experienced Inquisitor, who had earlier served in Ferrara (1579 – 81), the Nuncio Cesare Costa, the patriarchal vicar, and Giacomo Emo and Giovanni Battista Querini from the lay deputies were present. The Inquisitor's questions were not always recorded by the notary but can be reconstructed through the answers of the interrogated person. After an initial question on Luna and Francisco's origin, the Inquisitor examined the Jewish practices that they supposedly followed, possibly confirming evidence from the denunciations. His questions concerned the observance of the Sabbath and dietary customs. Later, the Inquisitor enquired into the observance of any Christian practices, asking whether "at their employers' home they genuflected and crossed themselves when the bells for the Ave Maria sounded".¹⁶¹ The Inquisitor tested the religious conduct of both witnesses in an unusual way; he showed them an image of Christ and the Virgin. Luna did not want to look at the image and showed her dislike exclaiming "Unus Deus". Francesco, who underwent the same test, simply said: "We do not keep such things at my master's home".¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ On the case see also 16, 20, 26, 27, 52 – 3, 54 – 5, 56, 58, 59.

¹⁶¹ Processi (1585 – 1589), 86: "Et interrogata se in la casa de li soi patroni predetti quando sona l'Ave Maria se ingenochiano et se fano la croce".

¹⁶² Ibid., 86, 87: "Et cum fuisset sibi ostensa imago Christi et Beate Virginis noluit eos inspicere dicens: Unus Deus"; "Et ostensa sibi in imagine Virginis Marie, dixit: Non tenimo di queste cose in casa del mio patron".

Both witnesses maintained firmly their adherence to Judaism. Luna allowed no latitude for doubt, declaring that she had been born into a Jewish family in Safed, while Francisco distanced himself from his family's conduct and said: "My father was born in Spain and I do not know the Law that he followed because he gave me to this gentleman Felipe de Nis".¹⁶³ The tactic followed by Luna proved quite successful, as at the end of her interrogation, the Inquisitor asked her to confirm her deposition by taking a Jewish oath. Unlike Luna, Francisco was not asked to confirm his testimony by any oath and the Inquisitor interrogated him about his circumcision and the baptism of Felipe de Nis' children. The requirement of oath was emblematic of the tribunal's strategy towards its understanding of the suspects' religious identities. Though the normal process required an oath before the beginning of the interrogation, in several cases the Inquisitor proceeded to the interrogation without oath, mainly with those suspect of crypto-Judaism and crypto-Islam. As long as the Inquisitor suspected that the interrogated person had sometime related to Christianity he was reluctant to accept a non-Christian oath.¹⁶⁴

On the same day, Felipe de Nis senior was brought for interrogation. The members of the tribunal had changed, with one lay assistant present and the nuncio's auditor substituted for the nuncio. From the beginning, the Inquisitor asked De Nis to declare his religious identity and the accused promptly said that he was a Jew. De Nis maintained that he had been born in Portugal, where also he had been circumcised. He narrated a common version of crypto-Jews' story: travel from Portugal to Antwerp and from there to Venice.¹⁶⁵ He and his family had adopted the guise of Christians just for securing their trade activities: "We called ourselves the Filippi because we wore the black hat and wanted to assemble our fortune, so that in Portugal and other places where I have assets they would not realize that I was a Jew".¹⁶⁶ Felipe de Nis followed the same tactic as Righetto had done some years ago,

¹⁶³ Ibid.: "ad interrogationem, dixit: Mio padre steva a Saphed, mio padre, mia madre, mie sorelle e anche mi son hebreu et niun de noi è stati battezzati et sempre ferma hebreu..."; "...qui ad interrogationem, dixit: Mio padre non so dove sia nato ma era venuto de Spagna et io son nato in Anversa. Dicens postea: Mio padre era nato in Spagna et non so in che Legge vivesse mio padre perchè mi dete a questo gentilhomo meser Philipo da Nis".

¹⁶⁴ See below 184 – 85.

¹⁶⁵ Processi (1585 – 1589), 88: "dixit, interrogatus: Io son hebreo. Et ad interrogationem, dixit: Son nato in Portogallo nè so el luogo particular perchè son venuto putto de Portogallo. Io son de età de 54 anni et sono 15 anni ch'io partì de Portogallo de Lisbona et andai in Fiandra in Anversa dove ho visciuto da hebreo [...] et sono ritagliato in Portogallo".

¹⁶⁶ Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 215.

by arguing that he was only liable to pay 20 ducats to the magistracy of the *Ufficiali al Cattaver* for wearing the black hat.¹⁶⁷ Despite De Nis's declaration of his Jewishness, the Inquisitor was interested in examining his associations in Venice. De Nis claimed that he presented himself as a Jew to Jews and he left the Christians to believe what they wanted.¹⁶⁸ The first interrogation of De Nis concluded without any confirmation by oath.

On the day of the arrest and the preliminary interrogations, the nuncio informed Cardinal Girolamo Rusticucci in Rome about the case. The Nuncio did not fail to note that the lay deputies of the Inquisition had shown interest in the case and facilitated the tasks of the tribunal. The Nuncio gave an indication of the way the tribunal would handle the case, as he described the accused persons as "Portuguese merchants who lived according to the Jewish rite and have been in Venice for a long time with Christian names".¹⁶⁹

On 17 October the interrogations continued. First to appear was Felipe De Nis junior, nephew of Felipe senior and son of Isaac Marco, Felipe senior's brother; Isaac Marco unlike the other two brothers, Felipe and the physician Tomè de Nis, stayed little in Venice and left for the Ottoman lands.¹⁷⁰ The Inquisitor asked Felipe junior to give an account of his life. The Inquisitor was interested in examining the conduct of the accused in places where Jews were not allowed to stay. He asked Felipe whether he had ever been to Spain, and later he focused on Felipe's stay in Antwerp, and why they have used Christian names, mainly in Antwerp, although they had Jewish names. As the accused responded that in Antwerp the Jews were not allowed to stay, the Inquisitor asked him to explain why the Jews were not allowed there.¹⁷¹ That style of interrogation can be seen as an attempt to verify the actual facts of the accused person's life and to decipher the tactics of dissimulation.

¹⁶⁷ Processi (1585 – 1589), 88: "Chi porta beretta negra può habitar dove li piace et per portar beretta negra ho inteso dire che non se paga altro che 20 ducati alli Cathaveri".

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 89: "ho conversato per Venetia con li Hebrei come hebreo con gl'altri come lor pensavano".

¹⁶⁹ Processi, Appendici, 85: "in questo tribunale del Santo Officio abbia ristretti questa mattina alcuni mercanti portughesi per imputatione che vivessero secondo il rito hebreo. Ha molto tempo che habitavano in Venetia con nome di Christiani"; see below 109.

¹⁷⁰ On the family's peregrination, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 215 – 17.

¹⁷¹ Processi (1585 – 1589), 90: "Ei dictum per che causa havendo nome de Hebrei hano usato nome de Christiani maxime in Anversa, respondit: In Anversa non ci sono Hebrei perchè non ci possono stare. Ei dictum per che causa non ci possono stare".

As has been shown, a common strategy used by the Inquisitor was to undermine the inward adherence to Judaism of persons who declared themselves Jews but had outwardly appeared as Christians.¹⁷² As long as the accused person did not confess any firm signs of Jewishness, the Inquisitor insisted that someone's public appearance as Christian could be understood as an act of Christian adherence. The Inquisitor's questions to Felipe de Nis junior were indicative, asking how he had not made any Christian act, since he appeared in public and associated in Christian name and clothing. De Nis admitted that he and the family had used Christian names but he explained, that they had never heard Mass; he added, that they had never visited synagogues either. This point did not go unnoticed by the Inquisitor, asking since they were Jews why they did not go to the synagogues in the Ghetto. De Nis's answer, that they did not want to give a bad example, did not satisfy the Inquisitor who wanted to establish that religious identities had also a public dimension and were not only a private matter. Later, he returned to the examination of signs that might have shown the family's practice of Judaism and took an interest in Jewish customs: "Since you live as Jews secretly, have you performed all the Jewish ceremonies and customs at home?"¹⁷³

Felipe de Nis senior's second interrogation followed the same day. From the beginning the Inquisitor warned Felipe that what he had testified the last time had not been taken seriously by the tribunal and that he was required to tell the truth. The Inquisitor asked Felipe to give an account of his life. Felipe did not hesitate to testify that he had been born in Porto but he added that, four days after his birth his father took him from Portugal to Flanders and later to Germany. The Inquisitor asked him about his ancestors' conduct in Portugal and De Nis promptly answered that his grandfather Isaac from Cologne had moved to Porto where he was forced to become Christian and the same happened to his son David, Felipe's father. Felipe did not

¹⁷² See 74, 90 – 101; see also some crypto-Muslim examples, 165 - 68. However, the Inquisitor recognized the value of inward adherence for Christian converts to Islam, who claimed they lived inwardly as Christians, 186 – 91.

¹⁷³ Processi (1585 – 1589), 90: "Ei dictum come lui non habbi fatto niun atto da christiano confessando in publico et col nome e col habito trattato e conversato come christiano"; "È vero che havemo trattando in publico come Christiani ma non semo andati a messa nè manco siamo andati in gheto alle moschee o sinagoghe de Hebrei. Ei dictum che essendo loro come dicono Hebrei perchè non sono andati in gheto alle sinagoghe de Hebrei, respondit: Perchè non volevamo esser sentiti et per non dar cathivo essemplio ad alcuno"; 91: "Ei dictum voi che vivete all'hebrea nascosti se in casa havete fatto tute le cerimonie et fraschade all'hebrea".

hesitate to reveal that his family background had related to Christianity, but he modified his testimony by saying that although his grandfather had died in Portugal, his father had returned to Cologne where he had died as a Jew. Interestingly, Felipe senior's second interrogation concluded without any requirement of an oath, while the notary continued to record him by his Jewish name, Salomon Marco.¹⁷⁴

Francisco, the family's servant, was called for a second interrogation on 19 October. Francisco testified that he had been born in Turin. The Inquisitor was mainly interested in circumcision as Francisco reaffirmed that he was not circumcised, and asked him to explain why his father had not him circumcised either in Turin or later in Antwerp, where they had moved. Later, the tribunal examined for the first time the servant Esperança. She testified that she had been born into a Jewish family near Cologne. Although Esperança was not asked to take the oath before the interrogation, it seems that her story persuaded the Inquisitor of her Jewishness and later he asked her to take a Jewish oath. The Inquisitor used Esperança as a source of information about the family and the servant Francisco, of whom the Inquisitor remained suspicious. The Inquisitor asked Esperança about Felipe senior's birthplace, whether Francisco was a Christian or Jew, and whether when she had been with the said Felipe they had ever performed circumcision or any other purification ceremony marking someone's passage to Judaism at home.¹⁷⁵

Two officials of the Holy Office visited the De Nis' home that day to examine some documents there and to inform Felipa de Nis and her son Álvaro, alias David that their interrogation was due. It is noteworthy that the Inquisition focused on Felipe senior, as the head of the household, and regarded his wife Felipa of secondary importance. Nevertheless, it has been noted that in crypto-Jewish families, it was mainly women who maintained the memory or affiliation to Judaism and passed it to younger generations.¹⁷⁶ In any case, the documents had disappeared together with

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 93: "Ho detto che ho da 54 anni, son nato in Portogallo et, per haver inteso dir da mio padre, ch'io naqui in la città di Porto che è verso la Galitia et, per quanto mi ha detto mio padre, de 4 dì nato me levò et me portò in Fiandra in Colonia"; 94: "Mio avo messer Isaac de Colonia andò in Porto, città de Portogallo et non so se de lì o de Lisbona lo fecero tornar christiano et così David mio padre che lo fecero tornar christiano"; "Et mio avo è morto in Portogallo et mio padre se ne tornò in Colonia et lì è morto hebreo".

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 97: "Ei dictum se in casa, mentre lei è stata col ditto Philipppo, hano circonciso alcuno o con altri lavamenti fatto alcuno hebreo".

¹⁷⁶ M. del Bianco Cotrozzi, "'O señor guardara miña alma'. Aspetti della religiosità femminile nei processi del S. Ufficio veneziano", in Ioly Zorattini, *L'identità dissimulata*, 263 – 67; the same trend has also been noticed for other "minority" groups elsewhere, who supposedly practiced dissimulation,

Felipa and her two children. The officials found there only Esperança, recently returned from the interrogation, who said that she did not know anything about Felipa's departure but that the books and the documents had been transferred to the Ghetto by the Jew Sanson Cabiglio.¹⁷⁷

The nuncio, on 19 October, again informed Cardinal Rusticucci in Rome on the trial's development, making clear the interrogation line to be followed; he described the suspects as "the Portuguese Marranos, who have already confessed that they were living in the Jewish rite".¹⁷⁸ The nuncio reaffirmed that the Inquisition's investigation enjoyed the Venetian government's backing, as the Signoria "for not hindering the Inquisition's duty" did not want to consider some Levantine Jews' plea for a mild treatment of the accused persons.¹⁷⁹

On 21 October 1585, the Inquisition ordered the inspection of the circumcision of Felipe senior, Felipe junior and Francisco. For the inspection the tribunal called two former Jews, Eusebio Renato, Governor of the *Pia Casa dei Catecumeni*,¹⁸⁰ and Giovanni Battista Benvenuto from Constantinople.¹⁸¹ The tribunal asked for a detailed examination of circumcision; it was interested not only in the confirmation of the circumcision but also when the circumcision had taken place, whether as an adult or within eight days after birth "according to the Jewish Law". The two experts confirmed that Francisco was not circumcised. For Felipe junior they agreed that he was circumcised at a tender age but they were unable to decide whether that had happened within eight days or a month after his birth. The circumcision of Felipe senior remained vague and the two experts suggested that the inspection should be repeated by a physician.¹⁸²

Felipe senior was called for a third interrogation on 24 October. The Inquisitor focused mainly on Felipe's family past. The tribunal soon announced that

such as crypto-Catholics in Kosovo, G. Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (London, 2000), 91; Personal communication with Ger Duijzings.

¹⁷⁷ Processi (1585 – 1589), 98 – 9.

¹⁷⁸ See also above 106.

¹⁷⁹ Processi, Appendici, 86: "Nel Santo Officio ove io assisto continovamente si attende tuttavia alla causa dei Portughesi marani, i quali hanno già confessato il viver secondo il rito giudaico".

¹⁸⁰ Renato offered his services to the Inquisition on many occasions involving Jewish issues. It was during the 1580s that the link between the Inquisition and the Catecumeni became stronger: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 265, 272.

¹⁸¹ In 1581, Benvenuto had been called by the Inquisition to give information on some Iberian Jews in Ferrara: Processi (1582 – 1585), 151 – 52.

it considered Felipe an apostate, because it had concluded that he had received baptism. The Inquisitor indicated how the tribunal had established Felipe's guilt; his ancestors' presence in Portugal showed that they adhered to Christianity. The language [*consta alla iustitia*] indicated that the enquiring process had been concluded and a conclusion had been reached. The tribunal informed the accused that Paul IV's decree was the basis of his imminent conviction.¹⁸³

After this announcement, the interrogation resumed. Felipe continued to undermine his ancestors' adherence to Christianity by arguing that they had been forced to convert, and when occasion arose his father left Portugal for Germany to live as a Jew. To his father's wish to return to Judaism, Felipe connected his own Jewish adherence too; he testified that, although he had been born in Portugal, he had not received baptism because his father had taken him from there four days after his birth and on their way to Germany he got circumcised.¹⁸⁴ The Inquisitor informed him that his explanation did not convince the tribunal, which regarded him an apostate and required him to recognise his offence. Felipe finished his testimony insisting that he was not a Christian or baptised.

After the end of the third interrogation, only a few days after the arrest, the tribunal had decisively moved against Felipe applying Paul IV's decree with determination. The way Felipe's name was used in transcripts illustrates the process, in which the tribunal assessed the nature of the offence and, subsequently, shaped the accused's identity; initially the notary registered Felipe as Salomon Marco, but after the first inspection of circumcision and the documents of the lease contract, provided

¹⁸² Processi (1585 – 1589), 100 – 1; on Felipe senior's circumcision, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 129, 216 – 17; see also below, 111.

¹⁸³ Processi (1585 – 1589), 104 – 5: "Ei dictum che consta alla iustitia per sua propria confessione congiunto con li decreti publichi et notorii de il re de Portogallo, fatti già del 1494 in circa et poi da li re de Spagna, che in quei regni et altri stati a lor soggetti non vi posseno habitare nè dimorare sotto pena de la vita Hebrei et consequentemente tuti quelli che habitano et dimorano sono Christiani che hano ricevuto el santo battesimo, sopra di che Paulo papa IV di felice memoria fece una legge o constitutione che tuti quelli che sono nati in Portogallo o Spagna et cresciuti s'intendono battezzati [...]. Onde se può concludere che l'avo et padre di esso costituito siano stati Christiani et battezzati, de li quali esso costituito è nato parimente nella detta città di Porto [...] Da tute queste cose se conclude che esso costituito sia stato battezzato et che poi esso sia ritornato al Iudaismo et perciò apostatando da la nostra santa fede christiana".

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 105: "Digo che mio avolo, quando era andato al Porto, era in tempo che quella legge che dice vostra signoria non era fatta, che lui andò là come hebreo per vivere da hebreo, come faceva a Colonia, et doppoi seguì quella legge per la quale mio avolo et mio padre ritornarono per forza Christiani. Et mio padre, per non vivere christiano, se ne tornò a Colonia dove visse da hebreo. In quel tempo che'l vene a Colonia, io era de 4 giorni nato, secondo che ho inteso, cioè quando me levorno de

by Francesco Contarini, landlord of the De Nis, the notary described the accused as “Felipe de Nis, who called himself Salomon Marco, from Porto, Portugal”.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the tribunal recognised only the Christian name as valid.

On 31 October, indicating that detailed results of circumcision’s examination could prove crucial evidence, the tribunal ordered a new inspection. This time the experts were Eusebio Renato and a physician from Genoa, Bernardo Millo. The tribunal insisted that the examination should also indicate when the circumcision had taken place. Millo and Renato reported that a callus on Felipe senior’s member proved that he had been circumcised in adulthood. For Felipe junior’s circumcision, Millo concluded that it had taken place in babyhood but not within eight days after his birth.¹⁸⁶ Later, on 10 December, Felipe senior contested the results of the inspection, and argued that the callus was the result of an operation because of medical problems, and not of a recent circumcision.¹⁸⁷

The Inquisitor’s insistence on the detailed inspection of circumcision might have sprung from the guidelines given in the fifteenth-century Spanish manual *Repertorium Inquisitorum*, critically edited and printed in Venice in 1575 under the sponsorship of nuncio Giovanni Battista Castagna. According to the manual,

there is a difference between the Jews’ circumcision and those, who convert to Judaism. Because the Jews circumcise their Jewish children in a different way from those who turn to Judaism when they are adults.¹⁸⁸

The adult converts the manual referred to, were, in all likelihood, forcibly converted Jews, who returned to Judaism. As the *Repertorium* was one of the first manuals intended for the tribunals of the Roman Inquisition, the reference to the alleged differences in circumcisions might have been of critical importance to the Inquisitor.

The trial resumed on 9 November with the third interrogation of the servant Francisco. This interrogation was a turning point in the trial. Francisco immediately declared that he wanted to tell the truth. He testified that his father was from Spain

Porto, per quanto me haveva ditto mio padre, io haveva 4 giorni et mio padre me retagliò in mar, in quel viaggio nel venir a Colongia”.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 102: “Philippus de Nis, qui modo dicit se vocari Salomon Marco de Porto Portugalli”.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 106 – 7.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 119 – 20.

¹⁸⁸ *Repertorium inquisitorum pravitatis haereticae* (Venice, 1575) 110; on Castagna’s role and attitudes, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 27, 73, 183 – 84.

where he lived as a Christian outwardly but secretly as a Jew. Francisco himself was born and baptised in Spain. At the age of sixteen, his family departed from Spain for Turin and finally Ferrara, where they lived openly as Jews. In Ferrara the family changed names and later, moved to the Venetian Ghetto. After a while Francisco's parents and three sisters fled to Turkey, while he remained in Venice in the De Nis' employment. Francisco testified that his father was short of money and a Jew, called Ioan Valenzin proposed that Felipe de Nis would help him with the expenses in exchange for giving his son as a servant.¹⁸⁹

On 13 November, the tribunal called Valenzin for interrogation. The Inquisitor attempted to establish the relations between Valenzin and the De Nis and how the family presented themselves to Jews. The interrogated avoided answering on the De Nis' religious identity but the Inquisitor insisted: "He was asked what he thought of the De Nis who were living outside the Ghetto with the other Christians and were dressed as Christians without the yellow or red hat"; "He was asked to clarify whether he knew that the De Nis were Jews or Christians...". Valenzin continued to deny any knowledge and undermined the shaping of religious identity by the objectivity of physical space claiming the private nature of religious adherence: "I do not know if he lived as a Jew or Christian; he lived at his home".¹⁹⁰ Later the tribunal went on to examine Valenzin's complicity in Francisco's employment as servant. Conducting the interrogation of Valenzin, the tribunal followed a hard-line policy towards not only the main suspects but also again Jews whom it considered accessories to the conversion of New Christians, such as Francisco, to Judaism.¹⁹¹ Valenzin denied having acted as an intermediary for Francisco's employment and the tribunal promptly proceeded to face-to-face confrontation of Francisco and Valenzin. During the confrontation Francisco changed his story saying that it was his father who had handed him to the De Nis. The hard-line adopted by the tribunal resulted in the torture of Francisco.¹⁹² Francisco had given contradictory depositions already, but the application of torture was mainly the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 78, 134, 229.

¹⁹⁰ Processi (1585 – 1589), 109: "Ei dictum che giudicio ne faceva lui, habitando questi Philippi come gli altri Christiani fuori de ghetto et vestendo alla christiana senza la beretta gialla o rossa [...] Ei distum che chiarisca se lui sapeva che li ditti Philippi fossero Hebrei o Christiani [...] respondit: Mi non so se habitava o come hebreo o come christiano, in casa sua era".

¹⁹¹ See 122.

result of the tribunal's aggressive policy. Also the tribunal ordered Valenzin not to leave Venice under a guarantee of two hundred ducats.¹⁹³

The torture took place in the magistracy of the *Signori di Notte al Criminal*. During the application of torture, the Inquisitor mainly enquired into Valenzin's complicity. Francisco insisted that Valenzin played a role in his entering the service of the De Nis but it was his father, who had exchanged him in order to meet the expenses for the trip to Turkey. Valenzin had just recommended the De Nis. During the examination the Inquisitor did not miss the opportunity to force Francisco to return to Christianity: "It was said to him, given that you have confessed that you have received the holy baptism, gone to Mass and confession, in which religion do you want to live in the future?" Despite his difficult position, Francisco firmly declared that his wish was to go to Turkey and live as a Jew: "My father and mother went to Turkey and told me to stay here for a year and at the end of the year to go with them. And I want to live in the Law as my father lives; I have told you that my father and the whole family were Jews and that we became Christians in Spain".¹⁹⁴

The torture Francisco underwent can be seen not as directed towards himself, but towards the Jews of the Ghetto. The Venetian tribunal did not seek the application of torture that often, but it was here determined to expand its scope of investigation outside the De Nis family and to examine their connections with the Ghetto; torture might help reveal connections. The tribunal attempted to uncover a network in the Ghetto that supported crypto-Jews outside the Ghetto, their conversion and subsequent departure from Venice. Some months later after Felipe senior had declared his wish to return to Christianity the tribunal announced its verdict against the two Jews from the Ghetto whom Felipe had claimed had circumcised him and Felipe junior.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² It was in the 1580s that all applications of torture in cases involving Judaizers took place, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 134.

¹⁹³ Processi (1585 – 1589), 109 – 12.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 114: "Ei dictum poichè voi havete confessato de haver pigliato il santo battesimo, andato alle messe et confessato alli sacerdoti christiani, vi si dimanda in qual fede volete viver per l'avenir, respondit: Signor, matteme per l'amor de Dio una volta! Che mio padre e mia madre che sono in Turchia me hanno ditto che stava un anno qui et che acabato l'annos sarà là da essi. Et voglio viver nella Legge come vive mio padre, io v'ho detto che mio padre et toda casa era hebreo et che stavamo christianati in Spagna".

¹⁹⁵ See below 122

The tribunal again called the servant Francisco for a short hearing on 12 December. The Inquisitor asked him about the religion he would like to observe. This time Francisco responded that he wanted to be Christian. Asked what dietary customs he followed, Francisco declared he followed Christian customs. He was asked to recite the Paternoster and the Ave Maria. Almost a month later, the tribunal again called Francisco. The tribunal's treatment of Francisco illustrates an emerging approach that combined an aggressive attitude towards crypto-Jews and a policy of re-education. The Inquisitor was interested in finding out the ceremonies through which Francisco and his family returned to Judaism: "He was asked to describe the ceremonies and rituals that took place when he and his family adopted Jewish names in Ferrara".¹⁹⁶ The simple ceremony that Francisco described, according to which a rabbi just conferred their new Jewish names, did not convince the Inquisitor, who asked Francisco whether more ceremonies had taken place. The interrogation of Francisco ended by repeating the process of readmission, re-education and discipline already started at the previous session. Francisco was required to cross himself and recite the Credo. As he performed as asked, the Inquisitor continued to enforce the disciplinary programme; he admonished Francisco that while reciting the Credo he should show reverence by bowing his head at the verses "Iesum Christum" and "natum de Maria Virgine".¹⁹⁷

The tribunal next turned its attention to the escape of Felipe senior's wife, on 20 March 1586. The Inquisition officials affixed notices in the Ghetto calling her to appear in the tribunal and confess her crimes. Earlier in February, the tribunal had agreed to the release of Felipe junior on bail. On 1 February, Cardinal Giacomo Savelli from Rome informed the tribunal that the Congregation and the Pope were satisfied with the handling of the case and especially with the unhampered application of Paul IV's decree. The Cardinal discussed the case of Felipe senior and admonished the Inquisitor to use torture if he found it necessary. He suggested the Inquisitor give Felipe the opportunity to abjure his offence and punish him as a formal apostate with lifelong imprisonment, otherwise to consider him as an

¹⁹⁶ Processi (1585 – 1589), 120: "interrogato et detoli che racconti quali atti et cerimonie furono fatti quando in Ferrara li fu mutato il nome de christiano in nome di hebreo et al padre et alla madre et alle sue sorelle".

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 121: "Et monitus fuit quod in recitando sinbolum dum dicit et in "Iesum Christum" et "natum de Maria Virgine" inclinet caput".

impenitent apostate and entrust him to the secular court. The Cardinal advised the Inquisitor to handle the cases of Francisco and Felipe junior according to his judgement but to be careful that they did not return to Judaism.¹⁹⁸ The instructions from Rome were in the same spirit with the policy followed already by the Inquisitor in the case of Francisco: application of Paul IV's decree but also favouring of readmission and re-education.

At the end of March, the tribunal decided to conclude the proceedings against Felipe senior. The tribunal told the defendant to prepare his defence. It seems that the tribunal was reluctant to give Felipe copies of his trial, as he requested, but it informed him that the core of the accusations against him was that the tribunal assumed that since he had been born to baptised parents in Porto he was also baptised. Felipe insisted that he had not been baptised and the Inquisitor asked him whether he was able to provide witnesses and documents that could prove his argument, otherwise he must declare the line his defence would follow. Some days later the tribunal appointed Tommaso Trevisan as Felipe's advocate.

However, the tribunal apparently wanted to avoid just concluding the trial with Felipe making his defence and remaining firm to Judaism. The tribunal admonished Trevisan that he should examine the case and declare that he would withdraw from the defence if he found that the accused was guilty. In theory, the tribunal used to admonish the advocates, who were also required to inform the tribunal if they were convinced about the defendant's guilt, but in the Venetian Inquisition's dealing with crypto-Jews' cases this was the first such admonition recorded. Indeed, a month later, the advocate informed the tribunal that after having examined the case, he had concluded that Felipe was really guilty of apostasy and he did not want to take on the defence.¹⁹⁹ On 9 June, the tribunal seemed to be determined to close the case and ordered Felipe senior that within nine days he should acknowledge his error otherwise the tribunal would decree his conviction. The tribunal's strategy was not to punish Felipe on the grounds of his apostasy. From March 1586, when the tribunal called Felipe and announced that he was to be judged

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 123 – 4; part of Cardinal's letter concerning Felipe senior is translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 47; Savelli also suggested that Felipe might be transferred to Rome, to forestall the Sultan's possible pressure on the Republic to release him, and help wider dealings with Portuguese in Rome and elsewhere, *ibid.*, 49 – 50.

¹⁹⁹ Processi (1585 – 1589), 127.

an apostate, the tribunal worked towards Felipe's reconciliation. To this aim, members of the tribunal including the Inquisitor himself paid regular visits to the prison where Felipe was held, and admonished him to renounce his apostasy. Two neophytes Eusebio Renato (Governor of the Catecumeni, and previously involved in circumcision inspection) and Alvisé Basso had also undertaken the same task. As the tribunal decreed that within nine days Felipe had to reach a decision, the process of persuasion intensified. The tribunal authorised the two neophytes to continue their visits and to advise Felipe that the tribunal was ready to accept his repentance. On 10 June, Eusebio Renato informed the tribunal that his attempts remained fruitless, although he had tried to persuade Felipe on theological grounds demonstrating the Trinity and discussing the Paternoster in Hebrew.²⁰⁰

Finally, the tribunal's strategy proved successful, as on 12 June, Felipe requested to appear before the judges. There, in a theatrical appearance, Felipe prostrated himself before the altar paying reverence for some time and later, genuflecting, addressed the court: "God has enlightened me and I beg for your mercy".²⁰¹ Felipe explained that for some days he had not eaten anything and remained obstinate, but then he experienced a godly illumination and asked the guardians of the prison to call Eusebio Renato. Felipe assured the tribunal that his repentance was true and that in the prison he no longer wanted to eat with other Jews, but with the guardian Girolamo and Alessandro Ferro, another Jew, who wanted to turn Christian. Felipe asked to confess and revealed that he had gone to confession many times in Portugal and on the island of S. Tomé.²⁰²

Two days later, Felipe was called again for a formal interrogation, which would give the details of his past and prove his decision to return to Christianity. Felipe declared his commitment and willingness to accept as punishment to stay in custody for one or two years, or wear the sanbenito. The Inquisitor asked him to give an account of his life. Felipe admitted that he had been born in Portugal and lived as a Christian there and later in Antwerp and Cologne. Additionally he said that he had bought the servant Luna in S. Tomé and had her baptised in Congo. He knew that his servant Francisco was a Christian because of his Christian name and another servant

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 128 – 9.

²⁰¹ Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 137.

²⁰² Processi (1585 – 1589), 129 – 31.

who had stayed with his wife was also baptised in Lisbon. His nephew Felipe was baptised in Lisbon too. Felipe insisted that he had not been circumcised but that the callus on his member was due to an operation and he was not aware whether his nephew was circumcised. Felipe further declared his repentance saying that if he were not married he would become a Capuchin. That time in the tribunal's transcripts, the defendant was registered only by his Christian name without any reference to the alternative Jewish name.²⁰³

Earlier, Luna and Felipe junior's testimony that they had been born in Safed and Germany respectively, had convinced the tribunal, which later released them on bail and allowed them to stay at the home of Sanson Cabiglio in the Ghetto Vecchio. However, after Felipe senior's testimony that both had been baptised, the tribunal looked for them, but witnesses reported that they had fled Venice.

After the declaration of repentance, Felipe remained in custody. The tribunal had not yet decided to conclude the case. It seems that through long imprisonment, the tribunal expected Felipe to reveal more about his offence. Indeed, at the end of July 1586, Felipe changed his previous testimony and confessed that he had been circumcised but he had not been sure whether to reveal it at the earlier sessions. He said that at Easter 1585 he found himself ill and got circumcised at his home by a Jewish physician called Benarioio. Similarly, his nephew got circumcised by Giuseppe Naar. It seems that even at this stage, the tribunal continued to send clerics to advise Felipe in prison; he informed that it was a priest called Siciliano who convinced him to tell the tribunal about the circumcision.²⁰⁴

Finally, on 17 October, the trial of Felipe ended. The Inquisition sentenced him to perpetual imprisonment and spiritual penance. On the same day, Felipe performed the formal abjuration before the tribunal. In practice, the lifelong imprisonment meant that Felipe was not allowed to leave Venice; he would present himself to the tribunal when he was asked to and he was allowed to choose where he would stay in compulsory confinement on bail of 1,700 ducats. Felipe chose the

²⁰³ Ibid., 129, 131 – 34.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 136; according to Felipe's story after he decided to collaborate with the Inquisition, he had experienced a three-phase return to Judaism; initially in Spain, later in Antwerp and Cologne, with total abandonment of Christianity in Venice. It has been suggested that Felipe's three-stage conversion to Judaism indicated that he was "more than a liar drawing on a repertoire of standard fictions": Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 215 – 17.

home of the neophyte Eusebio Renato, although it is not clear whether this place was the Catecumeni, where Renato was a Governor, or somewhere else.²⁰⁵

Apart from Felipe's punishment, the Inquisition was interested in his family, which had fled to Salonica. The Inquisition suggested to Felipe that his sentence would be modified in case he managed to bring back his wife and children and re-educate them to Christianity within one year. Some months later, in May 1587, Felipe changed residence and moved to the island of Murano in the house of Alvisé Contarini. In August 1587, the tribunal reconfirmed its interest in the re-education of Felipe's family. It informed Felipe that he had not fulfilled his promise and if he did not succeed in bringing back his family, the tribunal would order his imprisonment.

Finally, at the end of 1588, Felipe's wife, Felipa Furtado, alias Abigail, his children and the servant Luna returned to Venice. The Inquisition concluded their cases quickly. In two quite informal sessions that took place in Felipe's place of residence on Murano, where only the Inquisitor was present, Felipa and Luna confessed their repentance and wish to return to Christianity. Felipa Furtado testified that she had realised her crime thanks to the letters her husband had sent her, and that she hesitated about returning to Venice for fear of the Jews. Their interrogations concluded with the recitation of the Paternoster and Ave Maria. The Inquisitor did not examine Felipe's children. Some days later, both women performed their formal abjurations in the same place and the Inquisitor imposed spiritual penance.²⁰⁶

In the course of almost forty years, from 1549, when Francisco Olivier, the first person of Marrano origin to be brought before the Inquisition until the trial of the De Nis family, in 1585, certain trends in the Venetian tribunal's activity towards New Christians can be discerned, some of them having been hitherto unnoticed. As shown earlier, the Inquisition was not concerned about Francisco Olivier's New Christian origin. Later, in the trials against Tristao Costa, Agostinho Enrichez and Duarte Gomez, the suspicion of a Marrano past hovered over the hearings, but the Inquisition was mainly interested in the defendants' conduct. Even in the case of Costa, who remained firm to his Jewishness, the Inquisitor was mainly puzzled by

²⁰⁵ Processi (1585 – 1589), 138 – 44; on the Roman Inquisition's definition and application of "life imprisonment", Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 147.

the defendant's dissimulation. Those cases came before the tribunal at a critical point that is, when Rome had initiated a new policy towards New Christians. Also the trials coincided with a transitional phase of the Venetian tribunal: these cases were the last to be judged by Franciscan Inquisitors. From 1560, the Inquisitors were Dominicans. Despite that, the Inquisitor had clearly been in a process of learning and familiarising himself with the nature of the offence, as also happened some years earlier with persons who held Reformation ideas. Consequently, it is not surprising that the interrogated persons sometimes led the interrogation. These early proceedings of the Venetian Inquisition modify the picture of the Inquisitor, who "knew well what he was trying to find", whereas "the accused did not know what was happening".²⁰⁷

The patterns of Inquisitorial discourse and practice changed in the 1570s. The Inquisitors appeared to have been better informed and now knew what they were trying to find. The core of the trial was no longer the conduct of the accused in or outside Venice; it was baptism that shaped religious identities. Paul IV's decree of 1556, which the Venetian tribunal clearly applied for the first time in the trial against Righetto, underlined the proceedings. Finally, in the case of the De Nis family, again based on Paul IV's decree, the Inquisition proceeded against them. Also, papal policy towards New Christians still relied on the decree, as it was in 1583 that some Marranos were burnt at the stake in Rome.²⁰⁸ However, at the time of the De Nis trial, another approach towards Judaizers emerged. The Venetian Inquisition was interested not only in prosecution, but also winning back judaizing New Christians. The tribunal took particular interest in bringing Felipe de Nis and his family back to Christianity.

Regarding re-education to Christianity, it can be said that compared to earlier cases, the Inquisition was harsher towards individuals, but when it dealt with families it sought Christian re-education coercively. The Inquisition had earlier in 1558 applied this policy in the case of the Italian neophyte, Gian Giacomo de Fedeli and his family.²⁰⁹ Later this policy included cases of New Christian families. The

²⁰⁶ Processi (1585 – 1589), 157 – 64; compared to other Marrano families, the De Nis appear to have been quite united, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 217.

²⁰⁷ P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1978), 74 – 5.

²⁰⁸ Segre, "Sephardic Settlements", 120.

²⁰⁹ Processi (1548 – 1560), 267 – 315.

Inquisition's policy reflected the views of the Udinese jurist Marquardus de Susannis in his influential *De Judeis et Aliis Infidelibus* published in Venice in 1558.²¹⁰

As in these Venetian cases of Iberian Judaizers, a similar gradual inquisitorial awareness of certain offences has been illustrated in the Friulian *benandanti*, who over the course of fifty years, by the mid-seventeenth century, came to be identified with witchcraft.²¹¹ However, certain differences between them and the cases of the Venetian crypto-Jews should be pointed out. Crypto-Judaism never developed into a major concern, as magical practices did after the 1580s. In crypto-Jewish trials there was no "clash" between learned and popular culture. Most suspects of crypto-Judaism were educated persons of social standing. Finally, hardly did the Inquisitors seek to tailor alleged crypto-Judaism on the basis of preconceived norms. Surely, they became more aware of the offence over the years, but it was mainly the changing papal policy that underlined the Inquisitors' practice and discourse. The anxiety over crypto-Judaism waned in the early seventeenth century, as inquisitorial manuals might indicate. Explicit references to crypto-Judaism and Marranism appeared in the manuals of Spanish origin that made their appearance in the 1570s (the *Repertorium Inquisitorum* and Francisco Pena's edition of N. Eymeric's *Directorium inquisitorum*). However, in widely-circulating Italian manuals and instructions of the seventeenth century, such as E. Masini's *Sacro Arsenale* and the anonymous *Prattica per proceder nelle cause del Santo Uffizio*,²¹² no reference is made to crypto-Judaism and Marranism. Both works made references to Jews only in relation to Gregory XIII's Bull and Clement VIII's Bull on the Talmud and prohibited Hebrew books.

Finally, the trial against the De Nis family was the last that the Venetian Inquisition conducted against Iberian crypto-Jews. However, it will be shown that the importance of sacramental affiliation to Christianity, as it was emphasised in Paul IV's decree, continued to form the proceedings' basis, but this time in seventeenth-century trials involving accusations of crypto-Muslim practices or lapsing to Islam in Venice, with the defendants, especially of Iberian origin, claiming, as crypto-Jews

²¹⁰ K. Stow, "Church, Conversion, and Tradition: The Problem of Jewish Conversion in Sixteenth Century Italy", *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 2 (1996): 31; this process of re-education was evident in an *auto de fé* of Marranos staged in Rome in 1498, Foa, "Un vescovo marrano", 540 – 45.

²¹¹ C. Ginzburg, *The Night Battles. Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. J. and A. Tedeschi (Baltimore and London, 1983).

²¹² On this work see, 182 – 83, 189 – 90.

had earlier done, that they were only nominally Christians and secretly lived as Muslims.²¹³

By pointing out several cases where the Venetian government hindered the prosecution of Judaizers, two Roman documents of the first half of the seventeenth century, the anonymous *Raccolta di alcuni negozi spettanti alla santa Inquisizione* and Fra Giacomo Angarano da Vicenza's unpublished *Anima del Sant'Offitio*, emphasised the disagreements that arose between Venice and Rome, due to Venice's reluctance to bring Judaizers to trial.²¹⁴ However, most cases discussed in the two works were never reported to the Venetian tribunal; it is plausible to assume that it was only the papal nuncio who complained and brought the alleged Judaizers and crypto-Jews to the Venetian government's attention. Compared to the trials discussed here, the two Roman works present a quite distorted picture of the Venetian situation, as they fail to mention the cases in the years 1570 – 1585, when crypto-Jews were indeed tried and punished, with the Venetian government's open collaboration. When state security concerns existed, as with Righetto, who was arrested during the Cyprus war, and was regarded as a relative of João Miquez alias Yosef Nasi, Duke of Naxos, or when the boundaries between Christianity and Judaism were transgressed, as in the cases of Gaspar Ribiera and the De Nis family, the Venetian state was far from reluctant to allow investigation and prosecution. Finally, in principle, the Venetian government was in accordance with Rome in the cases of the De Luna–Mendes in the mid-sixteenth century and the Diaz in 1621, judging their dissimulation unacceptable. The difference was that having taken into account the safe-conducts it had issued in both cases, the government opted for maintaining its sovereignty and punished the defendants with deportation.

However, what the Venetian government was reluctant to pursue, were cases of Iberian New Christians, who immediately declared themselves Jews and lived in the Ghettos, without any attempt at dissimulating, thus conforming to the proper boundaries between Christianity and Judaism imposed by the Venetian State. In this view, in 1588, the Collegio ordered the release on bail of the Jew Nemias from Ferrara, who was arrested in transit in Venice, and in 1608, the Collegio and the lay deputies blocked the proceedings against Moisè and Iosef Masaod, alias Manuel da

²¹³ See below 165 – 68.

²¹⁴ Processi, Appendici, 351 – 62.

Costa and António Rodriguez, who had lived in the Ghetto since 1588.²¹⁵ Evidently, the Venetian government did not want to allow investigations into the Ghettos and those Jews of New Christian origin who settled in the Ghetto. However, Venice's reluctance would be better understood in comparison with the policy in other Italian cities. The Venetian stance was not unique; in early-seventeenth century Pisa and Livorno the authorities were equally reluctant to allow investigations into New Christians, who had settled there as Jews. The privileges conceded earlier in 1591 and 1593 (known as the *Livornine*) by Ferdinando I, had actually facilitated the return of New Christians to Judaism.²¹⁶ Finally, little is known about the situation in Rome, but future research might show the extent to which the Roman authorities undertook serious and extensive investigations into people of Iberian origin, who lived as Jews in the Roman Ghetto.

In the trial against the De Nis family, the Inquisition also became alert to activities of Jews from the Ghetto who had facilitated the family's conversion. The Inquisition strove to bring for interrogation the Jewish physicians and circumcisors Benarioio and Iosè Naar, who had supposedly circumcised Felipe De Nis senior and junior. Finally, as the two suspects did not appear, the Inquisition issued a decree of banishment and made provision against them that if they broke the ban they would be handed over to the secular arm and punished as "apostates and accessories of apostates, who may be publicly burned, or else drowned in the depths of the sea".²¹⁷ It was Gregory XIII' Bull *Antiqua iudaeorum imbrobitas* of 1581 that, among much else, had given authority to the Inquisition to proceed against professing Jews as collaborators in New Christian's return to Judaism.²¹⁸

The Inquisition was determined to apply Gregory's Bull, especially when Jews openly insulted Christianity. In 1584, Mandolino, a Jewish banker from Muggia was fined for uttering threats to a Lenten preacher and Benedetto was fined and sentenced to a public apology for insulting a neophyte. In both cases, the Inquisition

²¹⁵ Although it is not clear, the defendants' arrest was the result of the nuncio's and the Inquisitor's actions. No witnesses were involved in the accusation, Processi, Appendici, 109 – 130, 163 – 179; Processi (1608 – 1632), 37 – 8; On the cases, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 44, 186, 187, 193.

²¹⁶ L. Frattarelli Fischer, "Cristiani Nuovi e Ebrei Nuovi in Toscana fra Cinque e Seicento. Legittimazioni e percorsi individuali", in Ioly Zorattini, *L'identità dissimulata*, 121 – 25; L. Frattarelli Fischer, "Gli ebrei, il principe e l'Inquisizione", in Luzzati, *L'Inquisizione e gli ebrei*, 224.

²¹⁷ Processi (1585 – 1589), 136 – 37; translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 78.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 73 – 4.

was determined to prosecute the defendants.²¹⁹ Therefore, although it is true that in the 1580s no unbaptized Jew suffered penalties as Judaizers did,²²⁰ the Inquisition obviously adopted a harder stance on both Jews and Judaizers in the 1580s, in the period when the tribunal's activity switched from "Lutheranism" to magic practices and also reached a peak.

Some additional remarks can be made on the development of the Inquisition's approach to crypto-Jews in comparison with those few Christians, without any Jewish past, who were found guilty of flirtation with Judaism. From the 1588 case of Giorgio Moretto, a sailor who had an affair with a Jewish woman, attended Jewish ceremonies and continued to visit the Ghetto even after the Inquisition's initial rebuke, and the case of Giovanni Battista Capponi in 1588 whose heretical views and doubts over Christ were supposedly developed after conversations with Jews, to the 1598 case of Antònio Schiaves Rodriguez, a young Portuguese from a family of "Christianos Vecchios", as he said, who confessed to have found himself in hardship and converted to Judaism in the Ghetto,²²¹ the Inquisition's stance was consistently harsh. Moretto was sentenced to the galleys for three years, Capponi for five years and Rodriguez for three years. It was almost forty years later, in 1641, that Emmanuel Fernandes from Goa, a porter in the Ghetto, who lived in the S. Marcuola parish, escaped the punishment of galleys for having said that it was not Christ but Moses that had remedied Adam's sin and that the name of God was Emmanuel, in all likelihood having been influenced by conversations with Jews in the Ghetto. Fernandes was required to perform a public penance by holding a candle, bearing on his chest a paper that read "Condemned by the Holy Office", and standing bareheaded and barefoot outside the S. Marco church for an hour.²²²

²¹⁹ Ibid., 75 – 6; Processi (1582 – 1585), 81 – 115;

²²⁰ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 78.

²²¹ Ibid., 47, 61, 62, 165 – 66; Processi (1587 – 1598), 157 – 74; see above 9 – 10, 46.

²²² ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. "Emmanuele Fernandes", sentence 28 May 1641; on the case see 25.

The Inquisition and the Levantine “Other”

In 1573, the noble Andrea Barbaro accused Francesco de Dimitri, a Greek broker and merchant, of having been involved in the disappearance of one of his servants, a baptised Muslim, and Giorgio from Bulgaria, a servant of the noble Marc’Antonio Falier. De Dimitri was accused of giving shelter to runaway Levantine servants and helping them to return to the Levant. From the Inquisition investigation a Balkan-Levantine microcosm emerged in the house of De Dimitri in the parish of S. Giovanni Novo, Castello. Having escaped from his Venetian master, the convert Giorgio from Bulgaria took refuge in the house of De Dimitri, where he hosted Christian and Muslim merchants from the Balkans. Giorgio attempted to depart from Venice for Bulgaria with the assistance of some Muslim merchants when the authorities arrested him. Earlier some other converts, who worked as servants in Venetian houses, had succeeded in escaping.¹

The Inquisition’s involvement took place when Venice witnessed the growing presence of Christians and Muslims from the Levant. In the years after the 1570s, a variety of offences involving Levantines came before the Inquisition.² Before analysing the encounters between the Inquisition and Levantines, especially Muslims, an attempt will be made to outline the Levantine presence in the city.³

¹ ASV, SU, b. 35, proc. “Contra Georgium alias Turchum”, undated letter of Andrea Barbaro.

² See also ch. 4.

³ On the term “Levantine”, see Introduction, n. 9.

Mapping the Levantine Presence in Venice

As with the Jewish communities in the Ghettos, the Levantine presence was also detectable in Venice’s urban fabric. But, in contrast with the Jews, whose presence was highly regulated by the government, the Levantine presence was the mixed result of State sanctions and the initiatives of the Levantine communities. The position of foreign non-Catholic or non-Christian communities in the religious ideology of the Catholic state underlined the extent of State intervention in their presence. The Jewish presence was highly regulated, and regulations were also generated for non-Catholic Levantine communities, eastern rite communicants and Muslims. Moreover, as with Levantine Jews,⁴ other Levantines, even Venetian subjects, were often viewed with suspicion by the Venetian government, as far as their connections with the Ottoman Empire were concerned. Paolo Sarpi’s observations, full of aversion towards the Venetian subjects of the *rito greco* in 1615 are indicative:

For your Greek subjects of the island of Candia, and the other islands of the Levant, there is no doubt but there is some greater regard to be had of them, first, because that the Greek faith is never to be trusted; and perhaps they would not much stick at submitting to the Turk, having the example of all the rest of their nation before their eyes: these therefore must be watch’d with more attention, lest, like wild beasts, as they are, they should find an occasion to use their teeth and claws.⁵

From the early sixteenth century until the 1570s, the Levantine presence in Venice was mainly identified with Christians – Catholics, Orthodox and Uniates – from the Balkans. From a topographical viewpoint, their settlement pattern has been described as “the Balkan quarter”, referring to the areas that extended from the Riva degli Schiavoni in the south, the Merceria in the west, the canal-banks of (Rio di) S. Marina and (Rio di) S. Giovanni Laterano (S. Maria Formosa parish) in the north, to the Arsenal in the east.⁶ The establishment of officially recognised institutions

⁴ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 168 – 80; B. Arbel, *Trading Nations. Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden, New York, Köln, 1995), 55 – 76.

⁵ Quoted in M. Greene, *A Shared World. Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton, N.J., 2000), 44.

⁶ A. Ducellier, “Les Albanais à Venise aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles”, *Travaux et Mémoires*, 2 (1967), 416; the term “Le quartier balkanique de Venise” was used in F. Thiriet, “Sur les communautés grecque et albanaise à Venise”, in *Venezia centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente (secoli XV-*

represented one aspect of the Balkan quarter. Official institutions go back to mid fifteenth century, when immigrants from Albanian areas were allowed in 1447 to establish the *Scuola of Santa Maria e San Gallo* in the church of S. Maurizio. Until 1442, immigrants used the church of S. Severo, where they also ran their confraternity, although unofficially, since in 1444 the Council of Ten had ordered its dissolution. In 1426 immigrants from Dalmatia were allowed to officiate in the church of S. Giovanni del Tempio. Earlier they officiated in the chapel of the Hospital of S. Caterina d'Alessandria. In 1451 the Council of Ten authorised the establishment of the *Scuola of S. Giorgio e S. Trifone*, and an area in the former Hospital of S. Caterina, in the S. Antonin parish, was conceded for the edifice of the confraternity.⁷

Half a century later, in 1498 a new "national" confraternity came into being, that of the Greeks.⁸ After a petition submitted in the same year on behalf of the *Università dei Greci* by Zuan of S. Maura, carpenter, and Alesio of Corfu, *spicer*, the government allowed the establishment of the *Scuola of S. Nicolò*, which had its seat in the S. Biagio church. The petition brought as an example the government's earlier concession towards the Slavs and Albanians and stressed the service that the Greeks had offered to Venice for the conquest of Dalmatia, as "at that time most of the galleys of your illustrious government were manned by the people of the Levant". The composers clearly stated the philanthropic nature of the confraternity emphasising the assistance towards "widows and orphans who have lost their husbands and fathers in the service of Your Serenity". No reference was made to the

XVI). *Aspetti e problemi*, ed. H.G. Beck, M. Manoussacas, A. Pertugi, 2 vols. (Florence, 1977), 1: 222.

⁷ B. Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia 1300-1510* (Rome, 1997), 280 – 83.

⁸ The name "Greek" will be used mainly as denoting religious adherence and not ethnic origin. In his *Relazione Generale*, the nunzio Bolognetti wrote that by "Greci" he meant religious affiliation and not the lands. The *rito greco* was one among the other Christian rites that were followed by the Churches of the Levant, Stella, *Chiesa e stato*, 304. The same use of the term was also shared by Greeks: see, for instance, the accusations against fra Giannichio from Messina in 1616, ASV, SU, b. 71, proc. "Fra Giannichio di Messina callogero di S. Catterina del Monte Sinai", den. Geremia Zervò, no date; test. Geremia from Zante 26 March 1616. On the complex issue of "Greekness" as a religious identity that unified different ethnic communities, P. K. Kitromilides "'Imagined Communities' and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans", in his *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy. Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe* (Aldershot, 1994), 149 – 92; V. Roudometof, "From Rum Millet to Greek Nation: Enlightenment, Secularization, and National Identity in Ottoman Balkan Society, 1453 – 1821", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 16 (1998): 11 – 48.

religious status of these Greeks.⁹ However, the Council of Ten’s prompt response without any reservation suggests that the religious state of the community did not puzzle the authorities at that time.

The establishment of these “national” confraternities was the result of traffic of people from the Venetian colonies in Dalmatia, the coastal areas of Albania, and Greek lands, to the metropolis. Migration from the Venetian coastal areas of Albania goes back to the late fourteenth century, but it increased after 1440 and new waves of immigrants, resulting from the Ottoman conquest, appeared towards the end of the 1480s. Originating mainly from Durazzo (Durrës) and Ragusa (Dubrovnik), the majority of immigrants were children and young people intended for servants in Venetian households. Few immigrants were involved in trade, except for those from Dalmatian colonies, who were involved in wool trade.¹⁰ The Venetian government favoured immigration of servants to cover the needs in domestic servants and crew for the galleys. For instance, from the account books of the Barbarigo family it emerges that more than half of the servants employed in 1460 – 82 were from Dalmatia and Albania. Their number was still significant but lower in the first three decades of the sixteenth century, and declined after the 1550s.¹¹

Increasing migration and the need for social tranquillity, as “a great multitude of Greeks live in this city in the Catholic way obedient to the Holy Roman Church”,¹² clearly led the authorities to give permission for the Greek confraternity. Indeed, by 1509 the Greek population has been estimated at 4,000 persons, and a similar estimation had been given by Domenico Morosini, member of the Council of Ten, in 1479.¹³ Also, the regulation for unlimited female membership in the confraternity,

⁹ The petition is published in Chambers and Pullan, *Venice. A Documentary History*, 333 – 34; on the Greek confraternity and philanthropy: J. G. Ball, “Poverty, Charity and the Greek Community”, *Studi veneziani*, n.s., 6 (1982): 129 – 45.

¹⁰ Ducellier, “Les Albanais à Venise”, 409 – 10; A. Ducellier, B. Douemerc, B. Imhaus, and J. de Miceli, *Les chemins de l’exil. Bouleversements de l’est européen et migrations vers l’ouest à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1992), 128 – 220; D. Calabi, “Gli stranieri nella capitale della repubblica veneta nella prima età moderna”, *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome, Italie et Méditerranée*, 111, 2 (1999), 723; C. Mignozzi, “Vicende della Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni”, in *Le scuole di Venezia*, ed. T. Pignatti (Milan, 1981), 106.

¹¹ Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft*, 123 – 29.

¹² Translation mine; “magna multitudo Graecorum, que in hac civitate commoratur et catholice sub obedientia sancte romane ecclesie vivit”: quoted in G. Fedalto, *Ricerche storiche sulla posizione giuridica ed ecclesiastica dei greci a Venezia nei secoli XV e XVI* (Florence, 1967), 31.

¹³ H. Porfyriou, “La presenza greca: Roma e Venezia tra xv e xvi secolo”, in Calabi and Lanaro, *La città italiana*, 33; D. Jacoby, “I greci e altre comunità tra Venezia e oltremare”, in *I greci a Venezia*.

which the Venetian government had posed, corresponded clearly to the problems created by impoverished women, mainly widows; the Venetian government sought to provide a network of social cohesion to a community of recent immigrants who were not in position to integrate into the established Venetian networks. By the 1530s, the percentage of female members has been calculated as 30%.¹⁴

Contrary to the repeated assertion that the Greek presence in Venice was the result of the fall of Constantinople (1453),¹⁵ the Greek community in Venice did not emerge from the end of the Byzantine rule; this might have been true from the narrow viewpoint of the Byzantine intellectual and administrative elite,¹⁶ but the establishment of the community reflected the political and economic situation in Greek areas created two centuries before the capture of the Byzantine capital. Immigrants were mainly Venetian subjects and came from areas such as Crete, the Ionian islands and the Peloponnese, parts of the Venetian empire in the so-called Romania. One should add that migration accelerated after 1475, as a result of the Ottoman advance westwards and the increasing threat, or even conquest of the Greek areas of Venice's *stato da mar*. Immigrants and refugees came mainly from the Venetian colonies in the Peloponnese and the Ionian islands. Indeed, in 1498, the two representatives of the informal *Università* of Greeks who presented the petition for the confraternity were Zuan of S. Maura, and Master Alesio of Corfu. The same trend of immigration after Ottoman conquests continued also in the sixteenth century, when they conquered Napoli di Romania (Nauplion) and Malvasia in 1540, the islands of the Archipelago in 1566, and Cyprus in 1571. This is manifested in the first *catastico* of the confraternity (1498-1530) where members from the Venetian colonies of Corfu, Cyprus and Crete, Zante, Cefalonia, Lepanto and Negroponte figured prominently. Only a few members came from areas outside the Venetian state

Atti del convegno internazionale di studio. Venezia, 5-7 novembre 1998, ed. M. F. Tiepolo and E. Tonetti (Venice, 2002), 49.

¹⁴ K. Konstantinidou, "Female Presence in the Greek Community of Venice" [in Greek], in *Public Celebration: Five hundred years from the Foundation of the Greek-Orthodox Community in Venice, 1498 – 1998* [in Greek] (Venice, 1999), 190.

¹⁵ For instance, Porfyriou, "La presenza greca", 21.

¹⁶ The Byzantine elite mainly fled to Crete: F. Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne au Moyen Âge. Le développement et l'exploitation du domaine colonial vénitien (xii – xv siècles)* (Paris, 1959), 431 – 33.

that were under Ottoman administration, such as Macedonia, Thrace, the central and western Balkans.¹⁷

During the sixteenth century, the three Balkan confraternities and communities followed a different course. At the beginning of the century, the Dalmatians' confraternity was in a phase of development, as the commission for its decoration to Carpaccio suggests; but later, in the 1560s, the confraternity sought new members by broadening the membership to Italians.¹⁸ The Albanian confraternity entered a development phase after 1479, when refugees came to Venice after the Ottoman conquest of the Venetian colony of Scutari (Shkodër). In 1489, the confraternity obtained some buildings next to the church of S. Maurizio to be used for the confraternity's seat. By the end of the 1530s the construction of the confraternity should have been completed. In 1503 – 4 the decoration had also been carried out by Carpaccio. However, it seems that over the sixteenth century the confraternity gradually declined. At the time the presence of people from the former Venetian colonies in Albanian areas should have diminished. Pieces of evidence suggest that the boundaries between these two Catholic confraternities were porous. The *mariegole* of the confraternities prescribed that the *gastaldo* and *vicario* had to be from Albanian or Dalmatian areas respectively. However, in the ordinary membership, the division lines blurred and cross-traffic was common. The 1455 *catastico* of the Dalmatians' confraternity reproached its members who were also registered in the Albanian confraternity.¹⁹

It was the Greek community that in the sixteenth century obtained a prominent position in the Balkan quarter. At the same time, the situation in the Greek confraternity and community became more complex as, among much else, the problem of their religious adherence came to the fore. At the turn of the fifteenth century, different groups of people comprised what can be loosely defined as the Greek community. We can rather speak of certain groups of Greeks which fashioned different identities and had different relations with the Venetian state; these groups, as far as the existing documentation allows us to tell, distinguished themselves on the grounds of social position, symbolic capital and origin. In 1498, many of the

¹⁷ N. Moschonas, “La comunità greca di Venezia. Aspetti sociali ed economici”, in Tiepolo and Tonetti, *I greci a Venezia*, 231.

¹⁸ Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 44, 243 – 45.

members of the S. Nicolò confraternity were artisans. The two representatives who presented the petition were artisans too.

The petition of 1498 related that the Greeks had always served loyally the Venetian state and stressed their service in the conquest of Dalmatia, "where they thought it a glorious thing to spill their blood for the expansion of your state and exposed themselves to certain death, because at that time most of the galleys of your illustrious government were manned by the people of the Levant".²⁰ Two dimensions of the "Greek community" emerge from the petition. At the low levels of the community there was a population of galleyemen and many impoverished members of galleyemen families, who had died serving the Venetian state. Some artisans appeared to have the leading role in the community.

Later, the group that had a prominent role in the community changed, as the 1511 petition for the construction of a church for the celebration of the Greek rite suggests. The initiative was taken by a group of soldiers or mercenaries, the so-called *stradioti*: "We have been brought to this land by your excellencies to serve as your soldiers and as defenders of your glorious State" The group of mercenaries claimed that they had come to Venice with their families. Forwarding their petition they referred only to themselves without showing that they represented a wider community. They asked permission to build a church on the grounds that the chapel of S. Biagio was too small. They argued that the mixture of people in the chapel and the celebration in Latin and Greek made it difficult for anyone to attend. Another problem troubled this group of mercenaries; they had no place to bury the dead. Their problem concerned mainly the mixed burial with other people who did not deserve to be buried with the mercenaries. In contempt they stressed: "They mingle our bones with those of galleyemen, porters and other low creatures". It is not clear whether by "galleyemen, porters and other low creatures" the *stradioti* referred to other Greeks, for instance those who appeared in the petition for the confraternity, or generally to the humble population that lived in that area of Castello. Finally, the *stradioti* declared their religious adherence: "We believe that your lordships regard us true and

¹⁹ Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali*, 278 – 79, 285.

²⁰ Chambers and Pullan, *Venice. A Documentary History*, 333 – 34.

Catholic Christians”.²¹ The religious status and identity of this group of *stradioti* can be described as Uniate, as they recognised papal authority but followed the Byzantine rite.

The Greek presence in Venice entered a new phase from the late 1530s onwards. It was the period during which Italian cities competed with each other in attracting non-Catholic or non-Christian merchants from the Balkans and the Levant. This emerging orientation in the trade between Italian cities and the eastern Mediterranean has been successfully studied as far as the Levantine Jewish merchants are concerned. Nevertheless, despite the prominent role of Jewish merchants, also other groups of merchants, among them Orthodox merchants from both the Venetian and Ottoman areas, took advantage of this trade rivalry.

It was Ancona that first in 1514 granted privileges - special customs status - to Balkan and Levantine merchants, particularly merchants from Jannina, Larissa and Arta. The first two charters of 1514 were negotiated by a Greek and a Muslim respectively; a third one in 1518 by a Jewish merchant from Valona (Vlorë). In 1534, under the jurisdiction of the papacy, a safe-conduct was issued for “all merchants of whatever nation, profession or sect, even if Turks, Jews or other infidels” to stay with their families and trade in Ancona. Again in 1544 Paul III issued a charter for “Jews, Turks, Greeks, and all other merchants of the Levantine nations” to trade in Ancona and the Papal States. The same policy was continued by Julius III with a *condotta* of 1553, which renewed an earlier one of 1547 by Paul III. The charter of 1553 referred to “merchants of whatever nation, faith or sect, even if they are Turks, Jews or other infidels” and to “oriental Jews and Christians known as Levantines”. Ferrara and Florence entered the competition too. In 1538 Duke Ercole II addressed “Levantines, Slavs, Dalmatians, Greeks, Turks and [men] of every other nation, whether Christian or infidel, who may come to live or trade within our territories, cities or in whatsoever place of our state and dominion [...]”. In 1551 a charter issued by

²¹ Ibid., 334 – 36; on the early phases of the Greek institutions and their religious situation, E. Burke, “‘Your humble and devoted servants’: Greco-Venetian views of the Serenissima”, in *Street Noises, Civic Spaces and Urban Identities in Italian Renaissance Cities*, ed. F. W. Kent (Clayton, Victoria, 2000), 10 – 11; little is known about the bands of *stradioti* employed in the Venetian army. On *stradioti* in the fifteenth-century Venetian colony of Napoli di Romania, D. Wright, “Bartolomeo Minio: Venetian Administration in 15th-century Nauplion”, *EJOS – Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies*, 3 (2000): 61 – 95; on mercenaries in the Venetian army see below, 209 – 15.

Cosimo I called "all you merchants, Greeks, Turks, Moors, Jews, Aggiami, Armenians and Persians".²²

This trade competition led the Venetian government to offer attractive conditions for trade and to abandon gradually its protection policy on the Levantine trade, which was restricted to the upper classes, the patricians and the *cittadini*. Under such circumstances, whereas legislation of 1476 and 1483 excluded Jews, foreigners and Muslim subjects of the Ottomans from trading between Venice and the Levant, Lower Romania and places outside the gulf, in 1524 the government exempted its subjects of the *stato de mar* and Ottoman subjects from the legislation that prevented Venetians from trading merchandise of foreigners in their name, and foreigners from using Venetian ships. Levantine merchants operated in the grain trade, according to a Senate decree of 1527 which referred to "Greeks, Jews and Turks".²³ In 1541, facing the consequence of the Ottoman war of 1537 – 40, the Venetian Senate exempted merchandise from Upper and Lower Romania from all customs payments for two years. Merchants from Valona, whose important role in the trade of goods from Romania to Ancona preoccupied the Venetian government, received special concessions. The increasing importance of Balkan and Levantine trade conducted by merchants who were Ottoman subjects is reflected in the proposal of the Jew Daniele Rodriga to the Senate in 1576/7 for the establishment of a free-transit port [*scala*] at Spalato (Split). The Senate approved the proposal in 1577 but the project was implemented a decade later. To sum up, over the course of the sixteenth century Venice witnessed a fundamental restructuring in the personnel of the Levant trade.²⁴

During the same period, in the Balkans new commercial prospects opened up to certain ethnic and religious groups, thanks to the Ottoman administration and its favourable policy. "The victory of the Ottoman Empire", as it has been aptly

²² B. Ravid; "A Tale of Three Cities and their Raison d' Etat: Ancona, Venice, Livorno, and the Competition for Jewish Merchants in the Sixteenth Century", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 6, 2 (1991): 140 – 44; "[...] mercatoribus cuiuscumque nationis, professionis vel sectae, etiam si Turca vel Judaei aut alii infideles essent, ad nostram [...] Anconitam civitatem"/ "Hebreis et Christifidelibus orientalibus Levantinis nuncupatis": B. D. Cooperman, "Venetian Policy Towards Levantine Jews in Its Broader Italian Context", in *Gli ebrei e Venezia, secoli xiv - xviii, Atti del Convegno internazionale organizzato dall' Istituto di storia della società e dello stato veneziano della Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia, Isola di S. Giorgio Maggiore, 5 - 10 giugno 1983*, ed. G. Cozzi (Milan, 1987), 71 – 3.

²³ B. Ravid, *Economics and Toleration in Seventeenth Century Venice. The Background and Context of the Discorso of Simone Luzzato* (Jerusalem, 1978), 26.

²⁴ Ravid, "A Tale of Three Cities", 140 – 42.

described, “symbolised, in the sphere of economics, a victory of Greeks, Turks, renegade Christians, Armenians, Ragusans, and Jews over the two-century-old commercial hegemony of Venice and Genoa”.²⁵ From at least the 1530s, Greek merchants from the Venetian colonies but also the Ottoman lands got involved in the trade between Venice and the Levant. Shortly after 1500, Greek wool merchants bypassed the market of Venice and went directly to the markets of the *Terraferma*.²⁶ After the 1570s, although they were the prominent suppliers of silk, Levantine Jews had “some stiff competition from the Greek merchants”.²⁷ It has been recently suggested that a strong network between Greek and English merchant-entrepreneurs and ship-owners existed in the Ionian Islands and Venice in the late sixteenth century, and that the English relied more on the Greeks’ mediating role than the Jews, as it has been traditionally assumed.²⁸ Perhaps considering the significant trade activities of non-Catholic Levantine groups even in the cities of the *terraferma*, in 1613, the Senate ordered that Inquisition tribunals should not proceed against “Jews, infidels of any other sect [...] or anyone of the Christian Nation, such as Greeks and similar others, who observe their peculiar rites, different from the Catholic ones, and have their own clergy”. Unless those infidels caused scandal and showed disrespect to the Catholic faith, the Inquisition had first to consult the local secular magistracies.²⁹

From this increasing trade activity a new group of Greek merchants emerged that gradually assumed a leading role and changed the nature of the community in Venice. This change was reflected in the new regulation on the composition of the *Capitolo di 40 e zonta* in the S. Nicolò confraternity, approved by the *Provveditori di*

²⁵ T. Stoianovich, “The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant”, *The Journal of Economic History*, 20, 2 (1960), 240.

²⁶ R. Mueller, “Greeks in Venice and ‘Venetians’ in Greece. Notes on Citizenship and Immigration in the Late Middle Ages”, in *Ricchi e poveri nella società dell’oriente grecolatino. Simposio internazionale*, ed. C. A. Maltezou (Venice, 1998), 167.

²⁷ L. Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore and London, 2000), 68.

²⁸ M. Fusaro, “Coping with Transition. Greek Merchants and Ship Owners between Venice and England in the sixteenth century”. Paper presented at the XIII Economic History Congress, Buenos Aires, 22-26 July 2002, 20, 27 – 8. (URL: www.eh.net/XIIICongress/cd/papers/10Fusaro90.pdf); see also the remarks on the wider Mediterranean context, M. Greene, “Beyond the northern invasion: the Mediterranean in the seventeenth century”, *Past and Present*, 174 (2002): 42 – 71.

²⁹ BNM, Ms. It. VII, 2698 (12995), Capitoli tratti dalle deliberazioni pubbliche..., 4v – 5r; however, it should be noted that in theory, non-Catholics and non-Christians were not under the Inquisition’s jurisdiction, except on certain occasions (as when having improper or proselytising relations with Christians), Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, 21 – 3.

Comun in 1572.³⁰ At the level of membership, the confraternity gradually lost its initial orientation as reflected in the special provisions the Venetian government had granted for female membership. From a percentage of 30% in the years 1498 – 1530 female membership fell to 14% in the period 1533 – 1562.³¹ Similarly, the presence of members from the central and western Balkans declined after 1557,³² as members came overwhelmingly from Venetian colonies. Before 1530, as we have seen, a significant number of confraternity members were artisans. Later merchants figured prominently.³³

The growing presence of merchants changed also the religious nature of the confraternity. From “Uniate status”, the confraternity and community gradually assumed an Orthodox affiliation, with continuous interventions by the Orthodox Patriarch from Constantinople. From the second half of the sixteenth century, the confraternity accommodated Orthodox, Uniates and Catholics despite the growing rift between these affiliations. Evidence from other Greek communities in Italy illustrates how the presence of newcomers, mainly merchants, caused trouble to the existing communities and the Catholic authorities. In 1581, the Bishop of Larino complained about the growing presence of Greeks from the Levant:

These Greeks denied that the Pope was superior to their Patriarch [...] they do not believe in Pope’s jubilees but in those of the Patriarch in Constantinople [...] they are the most hateful to the Roman Church, its prelates and priests [...] And although the lay people are bad, the Greek priests, especially those from the Levant, are even worse, committed to their schismatic rites and hateful to the Roman Church.³⁴

As late as the early eighteenth century, Rome became openly hostile to the Greek community of Venice. In 1678, the nunzio protested to the Venetian government. His words illustrate the process which the Greek institutions and community had undergone since the mid-sixteenth century: “the S. Giorgio church was established by Greek Catholics and it was in union with the Apostolic Seat [...] but little by little

³⁰ Moschonas, “La comunità greca”, 235.

³¹ Konstantinidou, “Female Presence”, 190.

³² F. Mavroidi, “I Serbi e la confraternita greca di Venezia”, *Balkan Studies*, 24 (1983), 515.

³³ F. Mavroidi, *Aspetti della società veneziana del '500. La confraternità di S. Nicolò dei Greci*, ed. P. Piccinini (Ravenna, 1989), 38.

³⁴ Translation mine. Quoted in V. Peri, “Chiesa latina e chiesa greca nell’Italia postridentina (1564 – 1596)”, in *La chiesa greca in Italia dall’VIII al XVI secolo. Atti del convegno storico interecclesiale (Bari, 30 Apr. – 4 Magg. 1969)*, 3 vols. (Padua, 1973), 1:433 – 34.

the schism was introduced."³⁵ In this context some Greek Catholics established in 1708 a separate confraternity of S. Spiridione in the S. Antonino church, Castello.³⁶

However, despite the gradual Orthodox orientation, at the everyday life level, religious border-crossing was common and religious identities were often adaptable. This is substantiated by some Inquisition cases in which persons of Orthodox background, sometimes seeking to improve their employment prospects, approached the tribunal to renounce their Orthodox adherence and ask reconciliation with the Catholic Church. In 1589, the *miniator* Giorgio from the S. Giovanni in Bragora parish appeared before the Patriarchal Vicar and said: "I have lived according to the Greek rite but over the last year my wish has been to live in the Latin way in the law of the Holy Roman Church". Giorgio's decision to switch to Catholicism might have been related to his professional affiliations, as it was his employer Giacomo Biasi, who had instructed him in the Catholic rite.³⁷ Similarly, in 1629 Agnese and Elena, who worked as wet nurses in the Hospital of the Pietà, told the Inquisition that having been born to Greek parents they lived in the Greek way, but now wishing to live in the Catholic rite they approached the tribunal to receive the appropriate instructions.³⁸ Spiritual pursuits motivated Nicolò Mandricardo, a native of Zante but resident in Venice, to appear in the Inquisition in 1618 where he said: "I am very familiar with the rite and the ceremonies of the Latins, because in Zante I frequented the Latins' churches and I have also disputed with Greeks the authority of the Pope; and in the last four months I have taken the decision to live in the Latin rite".³⁹ Religious boundaries were often blurred in the prospect of marriage. Antonia, a

³⁵ Translation mine. Quoted in E. Birtachas, "Un 'secondo' vescovo a Venezia. Il Metropolita di Filadelfia (secoli XVI – XVIII), in Tiepolo and Tonetti, *I greci a Venezia*, 112.

³⁶ G. Plumidis, "La confraternita greco-cattolica di Santo Spiridione a Venezia (1708)", *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, 26 (1972): 51 –70; on similar divisions among other Levantines, 140, note 63.

³⁷ ACPV, Battesimi dei Catecumeni 12 apr. 1563 – 15 nov. 1762, first bundle of documents (1563-1762), u.d.: "Io ho vissuto secondo il rito greco, ma da un' anno in qua ho havuto volontà di vivere alla latina secondo la legge della Santa Chiesa Romana"; "Respondit: signor sì, che lo son stato instrutto dal mio precettore in casa del quale lavoro, che è ms Giacomo Biasi"; on the reconciliation of Greeks, see 182.

³⁸ ASV, SU, b. 87, proc. "Agnese ed Elena": "Essendo noi nate de parenti greci et havendo vissuto alla greca [...] voluto per l'avenire vivere conforme al rito della santa Romana chiesa, siamo venute all' obbedienza di questo santo tribunale per ricever quell'ordine che ci dara dato"; Working as wet nurses was one of the typical occupations of Greek women: Konstantinidou, "Female Presence", 192.

³⁹ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. "Nicolò Mandricardo": "io son prattichissimo del rito et ceremonie de latini, perche al Zante ho frequentato le chiese de latini, et ho anco disputato con greci per mantenere l'autorità del Pontefice Romano, et è da 4 mesi in qua che ho fatto questa resolutione di viver alla

recent Balkan immigrant to Venice from the town of Sebenico (Šibenik), had lived for four years with Teodosio di Camartinis, working as housemaid. In 1590 she approached the Inquisition to return to Catholicism. Antonia was a Catholic but being in the service of Teodosio, who lived *alla greca*, she also conformed to the religious practices of her employer, especially since he had promised to marry her.⁴⁰

The notion of the Balkan quarter is further substantiated by a consideration of the immigrants' residential patterns beyond the official institutions. In the fifteenth century, people from the Balkan areas gathered mainly in the S. Moisè parish in the S. Marco *sestiere*, and the S. Pietro di Castello and S. Maria Formosa parishes in Castello. S. Moisè initially attracted immigrants from Greek areas, but later Dalmatians and Albanians increased. In the Castello parishes, as one group of immigrants moved, another took its place. S. Martino initially was a centre of Dalmatians, but later became a centre for Greeks. S. Maria Formosa was initially populated by Greeks, but later, as their number declined gained Albanians and Dalmatians.⁴¹

In the sixteenth century, as the numbers of Dalmatian and Albanian immigrants declined, it is difficult to trace their residential patterns. Greek immigrants resided in Castello parishes such as S. Pietro, S. Martino, S. Biagio, S. Giovanni in Bragora and S. Giovanni Novo, although this view is based on data that might have included persons who can be characterised as Greeks from their place of origin, irrespective of religious identity.⁴² It was the apostolic visitation of 1581 which referring to Greeks on the basis of their religious affiliation, identified three parishes mainly inhabited by Greeks: in S. Giovanni in Bragora out of 2,500 inhabitants 1,250 were referred to as "greci", in S. Antonino, where, as it was noted, they frequented the church of S. Giorgio, and in S. Martino.⁴³ So the Greek presence partly concentrated in those parishes, which defined the "port zone" in Castello, and partly in the district's "central zone", which was better integrated into Venice's social

latina."; "Io son comparso quà perche fin' hora ho seguitato il rito greco, per esser stato allevato in quello, et ho creduto tutto quello che molti di loro credono"; on the case see also 203.

⁴⁰ ASV, SU, b. 68, proc. "Antonia"; other examples of mixed and troubled marriages between Greeks and Catholics, ASV, SU, b. 65, proc. "Elisabetta Balordo"; b. 66, proc. "Isabella Polo".

⁴¹ Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali*, 220 – 24.

⁴² G. Plumidis, "Considerazioni sulla popolazione greca a Venezia nella seconda metà del '500", *Studi Veneziani*, 14 (1972): 221 – 23.

⁴³ S. Tramontin, "La visita apostolica del 1581 a Venezia", *Studi Veneziani*, 9 (1967): 513, 514, 516.

fabric.⁴⁴ This settlement pattern might have reflected the permanent and transient nature of Greek presence.⁴⁵ In the late seventeenth century, there was a dense concentration of Greeks around the architectural complex of their church and confraternity; but mixed residential patterns still existed, as Albanians, whose confraternity never determined their settlement, and Dalmatians lived near, or shared the same houses with Greeks in the S. Martino parish.⁴⁶

A subsequent development in the growing Balkan-Levantine mercantile activity was the appearance of Muslim merchants after the 1570s, whose earlier presence had been sporadic. The increasing number of brokers for Muslim merchants demonstrates their growing presence in the Venetian market. In the 1580s and 1590s the *Cinque Savi alla mercanzia* were preoccupied with the number of brokers and sought to control their activities.⁴⁷ The years 1573 to 1645, when the Cretan war broke out, have been seen as the period that Ottoman Muslims' trade activities in Venice reached a peak.⁴⁸ It seems that early in the 1570s, the majority of Muslim merchants originated from the Balkans, from areas such as Bosnia and Albania. In 1582, some merchants from Bosnia asked the Cinque Savi to provide them with more brokers than the four ones who already existed and spoke "la lingua schiava".⁴⁹ Gradually Muslim merchants from the Levant, especially from Central Anatolia also made their appearance in Venice's markets. Unfortunately, on the basis of Venetian sources it is difficult to discern the origins of Muslim merchants, as the Venetians referred to all Muslims as "Turks" [*turchi*]. Earlier, in 1559, Kafadar has identified only one merchant as a non-Balkan Muslim, Aga Beg from Bursa.⁵⁰ However at the turn of the sixteenth century their presence became stronger. Recording his transactions with Levantine merchants, in his register [*Libretto*] covering the years 1592 – 1604, the broker Zuane Zakra of Cypriot origin included Muslim merchants from northern Greece to Aleppo and Central Anatolia (Ankara, Ayas). Most dealings concerned

⁴⁴ Davis, *Shipbuilders of the Venetian Arsenal*, 91 – 4.

⁴⁵ See similar patterns for other Levantines, 138 – 41.

⁴⁶ J. F. Chauvard, "Scale di osservazione e inserimento degli stranieri nello spazio urbano veneziano tra XVII e XVIII secolo", in Calabi and Lanaro, *La città italiana*, 90, 92 – 3, 96, 100.

⁴⁷ G. Vercellin "Mercanti Turchi e sensali a Venezia", *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., 4 (1980): 63, 69.

⁴⁸ C. Kafadar, "A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima", *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10 (1986): 201.

⁴⁹ Vercellin, "Mercanti Turchi e sensali", 53, 59 – 60.

⁵⁰ Kafadar, "A Death in Venice", 199.

camlets [*zambellotti*] and mohair [*mochagiari*]; Central Anatolian towns were centres of production of these woollen cloths.⁵¹

The residential patterns of Muslims in Venice illustrate further the unofficial existence of the Balkan-Levantine quarter, which stood beyond the intermingling of Christian population from those lands and included also Muslims.⁵² Already from the early 1570s, some Muslim merchants had asked the Venetian authorities to give them a place for themselves and their merchandise "in the same way that the Jews have their ghetto", as the nunzio Giambattista Castagna reported to Rome in 1573.⁵³ Nevertheless it was only in 1621 that the Venetian government, on the grounds of public morality, took measures towards the uncontrolled presence of Muslim merchants in the city, by the establishment of the *Fondaco dei Turchi*, where they lived segregated and under surveillance.⁵⁴

As early as 1516 some Muslim merchants stayed in the SS. Giovanni e Paolo area and later in Cannaregio in houses "per lo più di donne di malla professione".⁵⁵ However, bits of information culled from Inquisition investigations allow us to discern some Muslim residential patterns in the city from the 1570s to the establishment of the *Fondaco* in 1621. In 1591, the Muslim Celebin Ali, from the town of Adrianopolis - who got involved in the affairs of Holy Office after a young man Cossain, the former Christian Pietro from Russia, asked the Inquisition's assistance to return to Christianity - lived in a room in the house of a woman called Camilla in the S. Severo parish.⁵⁶ In the adjacent parish of S. Giovanni Novo, a woman called Paolina Briani lodged Muslims and Greeks for many years, at least from 1581 to 1588. Briani's mixing with Muslims and Greeks gave rise to suspicions that she had sexual relations with them.⁵⁷ At about the same period one Marina

⁵¹ G. Vercellin, "Mercanti Turchi a Venezia alla fine del Cinquecento", *Il Veltro*, 23, 2-4 (1979): 246 - 252; Kafadar, "A Death in Venice", 205 - 6.

⁵² It is indicative that among those who offered alms [*ricolte*] in the Greek confraternity appeared also persons of Turkish names, Moschonas, "La comunità greca", 237.

⁵³ A. Buffardi, ed., *Nunziature di Venezia*, vol. 11 (Rome, 1972), 69.

⁵⁴ See 142 - 45.

⁵⁵ P. Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi* (Florence, 1975), 127.

⁵⁶ ASV, SU, b. 67; on the case see 148.

⁵⁷ ASV, SU, b. 47, den. Girolamo, without date, test. Briani, 12 November 1588; on the case see 150 - 53, 160 - 62; two other women of "mala vita", Marietta Battaglia and Laura Malipiero, who were accused of witchcraft several times, ran a brothel in the S. Giovanni in Bragora parish and rented rooms to foreigners in the S. Biagio parish in the 1630s: S. Scully, "Marriage or a Career? Witchcraft as an Alternative in Seventeenth-Century Venice", *Journal of Social History*, 28, 4 (1995): 857 - 77.

lodged Muslims at the *ponte* of Ca' Leone in S. Giovanni Novo too.⁵⁸ In the neighbouring parish of S. Biagio, Muslims resided from at least the mid-1570s. Supposedly from that area some Muslims had taken a young boy who later, in 1585, reappeared in Venice as the Muslim Rustone and, after a denunciation, the Inquisition investigated the case.⁵⁹ Strangely, as late as 1649, after the establishment of the *Fondaco*, according to the testimony of the Armenian merchant Pietro, a nucleus of Muslims existed in the S. Maria Formosa parish behind the Palazzo Querini-Stampalia.⁶⁰

The Balkan-Levantine quarter served as a refuge for individuals of dubious identity. In 1590, having escaped from the *Casa dei Catecumeni*, the Muslim Giorgio Aly took refuge in the S. Giorgio dei Greci church to receive the baptism *alla greca*, which was his initial wish before he was caught up in the Catecumeni's conversion mechanism.⁶¹ In 1640, upon his arrival in Venice, Constantino Duca, a young man from an Orthodox family of Athens, who had converted to Islam in Constantinople more than ten years earlier, and wanted to return to Christianity, immediately went to the S. Giorgio dei Greci area, where a Catholic woman told him to go to the Catecumeni.⁶²

Residential patterns, human relations and networks and their intermingling emerged as clear agents of Levantine identity in the case of the convert Tommaso from Angori (Ankara), the former Muslim Abraym Celebi, who was supposedly forced by another Muslim to return to Islam and flee Venice in 1583. Tommaso had reached Venice sometime in 1582. Immediately, he associated with other Levantines and soon he expressed his wish to become Christian to his companions Domenico Giovanni, an Orthodox broker [*sanser*] of Muslim merchants from Napoli di Romania, and Michiel, an Orthodox merchant, who took Tommaso to the Catecumeni. After his baptism Tommaso stayed for two months in a room in the S.

⁵⁸ ASV, SU, b. 51, proc. "Tommano d'Angori", test. Giovanni Domenico from Nauplion, 15 April 1583: "come ve è informata marina che allogia i turchi al ponte da ca' Leon a S. Zuane nuovo".

⁵⁹ ASV, SU, b. 55, proc. "Rustone Turcho".

⁶⁰ ASV, SU, b. 105, proc. "Assolomamuto Salaman", test. Pietro, 1 June 1649: "et so che lui [Assolomamuto Salaman] mangiava et beveva et stantiava nella casa de Turchi con turchi, a santa Maria Formosa, dove stanno tutti li turchi, nella calesella vicina alli signori quirini stampalia da dietro"; on the case see, 169 – 71.

⁶¹ ASV, SU, b. 66, proc. "Aly Giorgio": "e perche non intendeva ben la lingua Italiana me ne parti, et andai alla chiesa de greci, per battizarmi alla greca"; on the case see also 176, 178.

⁶² ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. "Constantino Duca"; on prospective Muslim converts and the Catecumeni 174 – 80.

Giorgio dei Greci area, and later he moved to an Armenian's house in the S. Maria Formosa parish.⁶³ Tommaso associated closely with the Armenian broker Giacomo and the merchant Giovanni Battista, *persianus effectus cristianus*. It seems that all these Levantines kept a close eye on Tommaso's conduct as a new Christian and it was they who saved him from the Muslim merchants, who had kidnapped Tommaso on the islet of Povegia and were about to take him back to the Ottoman lands. It seems that Tommaso sought to be active in trade and by converting to Christianity he fostered his relations with the groups of Levantine Christian merchants. Even after his conversion Tommaso continued to associate with Muslim merchants and got involved in the cloth trade.⁶⁴ Tommaso's case indicates the growing presence of Central Anatolian merchants, Muslims and Armenians, who were particularly active in the trade of camlet. Finally, the group of merchants and brokers involved in the case reflects the observation of the *Cinque Savi all mercanzia* in 1587 that most "brokers and the others, who do business with Turks, Armenians and similar Nations, are ill-natured persons, and although some have become Christians from Turks or Jews, we know little about them".⁶⁵

It is therefore evident that the same areas which accommodated Balkan and Levantine Christians and their institutions also attracted Muslims from the same lands. However, the uncontrolled presence of Muslims preoccupied the Venetian

⁶³ The S. Maria Formosa parish was a centre of Armenians' settlement, thus confirming the area's role in the Levantine quarter. In 1649, a group of Armenian merchants and brokers, who got involved in the trial of the Muslim Salaman Assolomamuto from Rhodes, lived in the parish or adjacent places. The popularity of this area, although never officially confirmed, as a place of residence for Armenians is evident also from the presence in the parish of S. Marina of one Domenico de Georgio from Moldova, who appeared as a representative of the Armenian community [*procurator et consul nationis Armenae*], according to the way he introduced himself in the 1649 trial: ASV, SU, b. 105, proc. "Assolomamuto Salaman"; see also, D. Calabi, "Gli stranieri nella capitale", 726; as with the Greek community, conflicts, sometime bitter ones, as in 1650, existed between Armenians who followed the Armenian rite and those, who observed the rite but also adhered to the Catholic Church. In a 1650 lengthy trial, some Armenian merchants denounced to the Inquisition Tommaso Bartariel, an obscure Syrian Armenian cleric from Aleppo, accusing him, among much else, of celebrating Mass sometimes *alla latina*, and other times *all'armena*. Some years later, when Bartariel appeared before the tribunal, in his turn he accused his accusers of being schismatic Armenians, ASV, SU, b. 105, proc. "Bartariel Don Tommaso", den. 14 January 1650; test. Tommaso Bartariel, 1 April 1653; on the case see, 141.

⁶⁴ ASV, SU, b. 51, proc. "Tommaso d'Angori", first test. Tommaso, 15 April 1583: "et son stato da doi mesi in casa de signora Antonia a S. Zorzi di grieghi che è vedova et non ha marito et stava solo in una camera [...] doppo andai a star in case di Iacomo armeno in corte nuova avanti S. Maria Formosa"; test. Domenico Giovanni, same day: "Qui dixit el puol esser da un anno in circa che essendo io alla bottega de Cristophoro ... et era anche Michielin greco mercadante ... cathai li in bottega ove se el dicto Thomaso el qual haveva nome Abraym Celebi et disse me ne vogio far cristiano et cosi el menasemo alli cathecumini".

⁶⁵ Translation mine. Quoted in Vercellin, "Mercanti turchi e sensali", 54, 59.

authorities, which gradually sought to restrict their settlement. Obviously, there was popular discontent with the increasing influx of Muslims, especially in those few years immediately after the wars of Cyprus, and Lepanto and the strong anti-Turkish sentiment that the government's rhetoric and specific actions had fuelled.⁶⁶ The Turks in Venice were often accused of "taking away Christian boys and having relations with Christian women".⁶⁷ The accusations of exporting young Venetians were also levelled against Levantine non-Catholic Christians. As late as 1650, from the investigations into the Catholic Armenian cleric Tommaso Bartariel, the Inquisition trial took a new direction, and finally reached the secular authorities, after it was revealed that some Armenian merchants were allegedly involved in the exportation of Christian children to Smyrna, Constantinople and Persia, where they converted the children to the "schismatic" Armenian rite. A Catholic Armenian witness testified that the "schismatic" Armenian merchants in Venice "were more hostile to the Catholics than the Turks".⁶⁸

Under such circumstances, Muslims often ran the risk of being robbed and attacked. In 1574, two Muslims, Assà and Agì Mustaffa, complained to the Signoria that they had been attacked and verbally abused by a group of Venetians, probably soldiers, in the hostel where they stayed. The *Avogaria di Comun*, the public prosecutors, immediately took over the handling of the case, and some days later the authorities reconfirmed public proclamations against all those who mistreated Ottoman subjects, under sentence of five years in the galleys.⁶⁹ Moreover, in the same period, the government's preoccupation with Muslims or Christian renegades allegedly spying in the city for the Sultan intensified.⁷⁰ The magistracies involved in such cases anxiously sought to track down suspicious movements within and outside the city. In 1593, the authorities at the Spanish ambassador's request seized and

⁶⁶ For instance, in 1570, the government arrested Ottoman subjects in Venice and its territories and confiscated their property, Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 65 – 74.

⁶⁷ Quoted in U. Tucci, "Tra Venezia e mondo turco: i mercanti", in *Venezia e i Turchi. Scontri e confronti di due civiltà* (Milan, 1985), 51.

⁶⁸ ASV, SU, b. 105, proc. "Bartariel Don Tommaso", test. Tommaso Bartariel, 1 April 1653; test. Jacob de Iesus 3 April 1653; on other cases involving alleged exportation of Christian children to the Levant, 145 – 51.

⁶⁹ ASV, Avogaria di Comun, Miscellanea Civile, b. 279, fascicolo 7, proclamation of 20 March 1574: "Che niuno, et sia chi si voglia, non ardisca, per alcun modo, forma, over inzegno, così in parole, come in fatti, ingiuriar, ne offender, ne far offender, o usar parole di qual si voglia sorte, iniuriase, o altramente contra li sudditi, et rapresentanti il Serenissimo Signor Turco, ma quelli ben trattar, et accarezzar, sotto pena, di servir per anni cinque in galia de condannadi".

interrogated two Muslims from Granada, who were about to depart for the Levant, and later they passed them to authorities in Milan.⁷¹

As we saw above (124), one of the earliest nuclei of Muslim residence revealed after an Inquisition investigation in 1573 was at Francesco de Dimitri's home in the S. Giovanni Novo parish. Francesco de Dimitri appeared to have been a key figure in accommodating Muslim merchants. In the mid 1570s, for the first time the Venetian government considered the problem of the Muslim presence at the initiative of the Greek Francesco di Dimitri Litino. It seems that Litino and Francesco de Dimitri, involved in the Inquisition case of 1573, were the same person.⁷² Little is known about Litino but, bringing together bits of information, Litino emerges as an emblematic figure who epitomised the nature of the Balkan – Levantine quarter, in the heart of which he also lived. He originated from Crete, but he declared Venice as “*patria mia*”. His first wife, Margarita, who died sometime around 1549, was from Clissa (Klis) on the Dalmatian coast. At the time of his Inquisition trial he was married to a Giulia. According to Giulia's testimony they lived in the *rito greco*, since she said that they fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays. At the time of the death of his first wife Francesco was a sewer. Later he traded cereals from the Ottoman Empire to Venice. At the time of his trial he operated as a broker for Muslim merchants, and he rented rooms to Muslims and Christians from the Greek islands. Litino maintained relations with the Ottoman world. He told the Inquisition:

I was a merchant of wheat as you can see in the *officio delle biave*; and I can confirm that when I was in Turkey [looking] for wheat I put my life and property at risk to take from Patras a Turk with his wife and four daughters; and I had them baptised in the church of SS. Apostoli in 1551.

⁷⁰ Preto, *I servizi segreti di Venezia*, 102 – 7.

⁷¹ ASV, Quarantia Criminal, b. 111, proc. 123.

⁷² It was P. Preto who first suggested this identification: *Venezia e i Turchi*, 130, n. 38. Recently E. Concina accepted fully the suggestion adding that Francesco di Dimitri Litino was also called “Fraia”: *Fondaci. Architettura, arte e mercatura tra Levante, Venezia e Alemagna* (Venice, 1997), 222, n. 12. Indeed, Francesco de Dimitri from the Inquisition case of 1573 was also known as “Frangia”: ASV, SU, b. 35, proc. “Contra Georgium alias Turchum”: den. Zacharia Andrea Barbaro, 16 August 1573: “il quale poi ascossossi in casa di Frangia”; test. Francesco de Dimitri, 20 August 1573: “Constituto nel santo officio...Francesco de Dimitri detto Frangia”.

Having transactions with persons from the Balkans, Francesco apparently had a good command of Slavic dialects for communicating with the Muslim merchants he housed.⁷³

Motivated by his familiarity with the Ottoman world and operating as broker for Muslim merchants, Francesco di Dimitri Litino suggested in 1574 that for moral reasons and the merchants’ safety, the government should find a place for them. A fee on merchandise would facilitate the operation of a dwelling place, which would be run by Litino and his family. Familiar with the world of foreign merchants Litino did not fail to mention that his project was in accordance with practices which the Ottomans also followed for Christian merchants in their lands: “come anco lor turchi nelli loro paesi di Levante han provisto alla nation Christiana”. The Senate approved Litino’s petition in 1575 and for more than a decade the Venetian government authorised its magistracies, the *Cinque Savi alla mercanzia* and the *Sette Savi a Rialto*, to search for a suitable place, but without result. A provisional solution was adopted in 1575. The government accepted Bartolomeo Vendramin’s offer to use his building near the church of S. Mattio in Rialto as “spazio di turchi e loro mercanzie”. Earlier the building had been used by the *Osteria con l’Insegna dell’Angelo*. This accommodation for Muslims was under Litino’s and his heirs’ administration and came to be known as the *Hostaria ovvero Fontico de’Turchi a San Mattio di Rialto*.

The place operated on a curfew time basis. The guardians opened its gates at sunrise and closed them at sunset. Provisions were also taken for the restricted access of women and young people. Under Litino’s guidance the place was provided with a Turkish bath [*hammam*] for the comfort of its visitors. The selection of the Hostaria reflected the strategies of accommodating a minority which was not welcome but necessary. The Hostaria was in a central area of economic activity but also isolated and with limited access facilities. The Hostaria hosted mainly Muslim merchants from the Balkans (Bosnia and Albania), an aspect that the Cinque Savi clearly recognised, referring to the place as occupied by Muslims of Bosnia [*Turchi della*

⁷³ Concina, *Fondaci*, 222, n. 12; ASV, SU, b. 35, proc. “Contra Georgium alias Turchum”: test. Giulia, 22 August 1573: “et noi non magnemo carne, ne de mercore, ne de venere per ogni gran cosa”; second test. Francesco de Dimitri, 9 September 1573: “Deinde subiunxit ex se Io son stato mercadante de formenti, come si puo veder nell’officio delle biave, et mi offerisco di giustificar che io son stato per formento in Turchia, et che ho messo la mia vita et facultà in pericolo per haver condotto fuori de Patrasso un Turco, con sua mogier con 4 fie, et li ho fatto battizar a S. Apostoli del 1551”; test.

Bossina]. At that time Levantine Muslims [*Turchi anatolici e constantinopolitani* or *zambellottieri*] were fewer than the Balkan Muslims and, as they told the authorities, they were reluctant to share the same place with the latter.⁷⁴

Despite several legislations and the reports by the Cinque Savi no definite solution to housing the Muslims was given. In the meanwhile Litino's widow Giulia, his son Zorzi and some relatives continued to operate the Hostaria in the Rialto. The concern about the presence of Muslims persisted, as can be seen from the complaint of Leonardo Donà, the future Doge, in 1596 about the problems that the mixing of Muslims in the Christians' houses created. It seems that the delay reflected, among much else, a reluctance to authorise the Muslim presence in Venice with a permanent and officially established dwelling place. An anonymous memorandum of 1602 pointed out the dangers that could result from such a plan, as subjects of the Sultan would live freely and practise their religion in the city.⁷⁵ The memorandum echoed a report of 1574 by the nunzio Castagna who, referring to the early plans for a Muslim house, accused them together with Greeks and Jews, “who are all enemies of Christianity”, of espionage.⁷⁶ On the other hand, the delay was the result of disagreements, as several plans were submitted and several people were interested in participating in a project that might have proved lucrative.⁷⁷

Finally, in 1620 the Cinque Savi and Giovanni Battista Litino, Francesco's grandson, took steps for a permanent solution. The magistracy reported that a suitable place had been found in a house on the Grand Canal, which once housed the Duke of Ferrara and belonged to the then Doge Antonio Priuli. The administration of the place would be given to Giovanni Battista Litino. In May 1621, the Collegio and the Doge approved the establishment of the *Fondaco dei Turchi*.⁷⁸

The rules on the Fondaco's operation set by the Cinque Savi in 1621 clearly reflected the policy on segregation and elimination of Muslim – Christian contacts.

Zaccaria, 25 August 1573: “Dicens Interrogatus Frangia parlava con il Turco in schiavonesco, et un schiavetto del Turco, che sa parlar un poco Italian li aiutava a parlar insieme”.

⁷⁴ Concina, *Fondaci*,. 223 – 4, 228 – 9, 232 – 235; B. Ravid, “The Religious, Economic and Social Background of the Establishment of the Ghetti of Venice”, in Cozzi, *Gli ebrei a Venezia*, 234 – 35, 237.

⁷⁵ Ravid, “The Religious Background”, 237 – 38.

⁷⁶ Buffardi, *Nunziature*, vol. 11: 283.

⁷⁷ For a full report on the complex negotiations, BNM, Ms. It. VII, 1764 (7759), *Fondico dei Turchi*. Memorie.

⁷⁸ Ravid, “The Religious Background”, 239 – 41.

Gates leading to land and balconies were walled up, and walls were erected so that people who lived nearby could not see the courtyard. Women and young men were not allowed to enter the Fondaco, which operated on a curfew time basis with the guardians responsible for locking the doors from outside. The Fondaco would accommodate all Muslims, even Persians and Armenians according to the *dragomanno* Giacomo Nores’s report. Given the earlier reluctance of Asian Muslims to mix with Balkan Muslims, provisions were made so that each group has its own separate space. The residents’ religious needs were also taken into account. However, while Venetians did not differentiate between Muslims, those of Persian origin were also reluctant to stay with Muslims from Central Asia.⁷⁹

The establishment of the Fondaco completed the process of accommodating non-Catholic and non-Christian foreign communities in Venice, begun in the late fifteenth century. Two patterns of residential strategies were followed; one that of segregation as in successive Jewish Ghettos, and the other that of linking state policy with the initiatives of local communities, suiting their needs, as with the Balkan-Levantine pattern in Castello. Finally, the Muslim presence summarised both strategies hitherto observed. From their unrestricted settlement, mainly in the unofficial Balkan-Levantine quarter, due to cultural affiliations and professional networks, the Venetian government resolved to move the Muslims, thus providing a solution similar to that, more than a century before, for the Jews. As late as 1631, the term Ghetto, from its initial neutral use had obtained the meaning of the segregated area where aliens, particularly Jews and Muslims were allowed to stay. The Spanish *fra Giovanni Fecondo*, accused in a trial in 1631 of reverting to Islam, referred to “the Ghetto, that is, the house of the Turks”.⁸⁰

The Inquisition and Crypto – Muslim Practices

Already from the 1570s the Inquisition got involved in offences that sprang from the growing Muslim presence in Venice. From a statistical point of view, and their

⁷⁹ The rules are published in Chambers and Pullan, *Venice. A Documentary History*, 350 – 52; Concina, *Fondaci*, 236, 239 – 240.

impact on the Inquisition's activities, offences involving aspects of Islam, together with a number of other misconducts, such as crypto-Judaism, remained of secondary importance. Roughly speaking, the Inquisition's involvement in offences relating to Islam developed along three directions: preventing the alleged flight of Christians, especially young people, to Ottoman lands, where they intended to convert to Islam; investigating accusations of lapsing into Islam or observing some crypto-Muslim practices in Venice; and reconciling Christians, who had sometime converted to Islam. In the first two instances, as will be shown, the Inquisition operated according to its typical role, as a prosecuting mechanism; in the reconciliation of former Christians, the Inquisition's involvement had also a mediating aspect.⁸¹

In 1579 Alvise Moro, governor of the *Pia Casa dei Catecumeni*, gave notice to the Holy Office that Giovanni Battista, a former Muslim from Sarajevo, having already transferred his belongings to a Turkish vessel, was about to leave the Catecumeni for the Ottoman lands. Initially, Giovanni Battista was under the responsibility of the Patriarch of Aquileia who had entrusted him to the Catecumeni for instruction and baptism. After a couple of months of catechism, Giovanni Battista was baptised by the Patriarch of Venice and consigned back to his master in Aquileia.⁸²

In 1592, a well-known figure in Inquisition trials, especially involving Jewish offences, in the 1580s and 1590s, Eusebio Renato, a former Jew and Governor of the Catecumeni informed the Holy Office that rumours had circulated in the Piazza S. Marco that a boy had been kidnapped by some Turks. One of the *Avogadori di Comun* sent a bailiff to the Turkish vessel, who found and released the boy.⁸³

⁸⁰ ASV, SU, b. 88, proc. "fra Giovanni Fecondo", test. fra Giovanni, 24 May 1631: "dove ero io, overo nel Ghetto cioè casa de Turchi"; on the case see 165 – 69.

⁸¹ For a detailed discussion on the Inquisition's reconciliation of former Christians, see ch. 4.

⁸² ASV, SU, b. 45, proc. "Giovanni Battista di Bossina", report Alvise Moro, 16 June 1579: "Monsignor Illustrissimo Patriarcha d'aquileia havendo un turcho giovine in casa lo deti a noi in governo per instruirlo alla fede nostra cristiana et lo tenessimo da 50 giorni in circa alli cathacumini et lo instruissimo nella fede et fu battizzato de monsignor Illustrissimo Patriarcha di Venetia et è notato nel libro nostro di cathecumini et li fu posto nome al battesimo Ioanne Battista dopoi lo ritornassimo in casa del detto Illustrissimo Patriarcha aquilegiens".

⁸³ Processi (1587 – 1598), 102 - 3: "Un giorno della presente settimana non so che giorno fosse ma so che non era redutto questo santo tribunale, che, essendo a San Marco et ragionandosi che li Turchi havevano imbarcato un putto christiano per condurlo in Turchia ... andò meser Antonio Zogia mercante da Piave da uno de signori avogadori et ottene che ottenne che questo putto fu rehavuto et mandato a suo padre perché il detto signor avogador mandò un capitano alla nave dove egli era, che era appresso San Marco et trovò il detto putto et lo condusse dal detto signor avogador il qual lo mandò a consignar alli suoi"; on Renato, below 31, 109, 111, 116, 118.

Renato's information reflected general Christian anxieties about Muslims or other non-Christians, according to which they were continually attempting to seduce or kidnap Christian children, leading them to their religion and impoverishing Christianity.⁸⁴ Witnesses and accusers often recognised that the Muslim presence in the city mainly endangered specific groups of people, such as former Muslims, who worked as house-servants⁸⁵ and unprotected Christian children. In 1592, Antonio Zoia testified that he had thought that a child that had been found in a Turkish ship was one of the children hosted in the institution of S. Maria della Pietà for abandoned infants.⁸⁶ Similarly, almost a decade earlier, the broker Giorgio Constantino from Coron reported that he had recognised a Christian child accompanied by a Turk, as "one of the children of the Sanità", probably another abandoned child.⁸⁷

In 1573, in Francesco de Dimitri's trial involving the suspicion of servants' disappearance to the Ottoman lands, the Inquisitor, reproducing a common Christian view on Turks, emphatically reminded the accused, although a Greek, of his responsibilities as a Christian:

Reasonably you have to know that the Turks at the first opportunity seek to seduce Christian children and take them to the Muslim sect; so, although you are a Christian and accommodate Turks, why don't you take care of the Christian children that come to your home, that is, not to be seduced and negate the holy baptism?⁸⁸

In a letter of 1592 to the Venetian Inquisitor, showing a similar sensitivity and anxiety, the Roman Congregation gave him authority to command investigation into Turkish vessels in order to prevent possible exportation of Christian children to the

⁸⁴ A parallel can be drawn here with the Inquisition's concern at about the same time about black slaves allegedly being brought by Jews to the Ghetto and turned to Judaism, Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 74 – 5.

⁸⁵ In the late fifteenth century it was the secular authorities that took measures against the escape of slaves, R. C. Mueller, "Venezia e i primi schiavi neri", *Archivio Veneto*, V serie, 113 (1979): 141 – 41. Nonetheless, in the sixteenth century the jurisdiction passed to the Holy Office, since apart from their escape there was also the crime of apostasy.

⁸⁶ Processi (1587 – 1598), 104: "ch'io lo viddi et era un figliuolo di buon aspetto et povero et all'habito, secondo al mio parer mi parse che fosse uno de figliuoli della Pietà".

⁸⁷ ASV, SU, b. 46, proc. "Giorgio Constantino di Corone" [the case is not registered in the Sant'Uffizio Index 303]: report of Giorgio Constantino, 26 January 1580: "ditto putto il quale havendomi detto chel giera dela sanità".

⁸⁸ ASV, SU, b. 35, second test. Francesco, 9 September 1573: "Ei dictum Rasonevolente voi dovete saper che Turchi quanto piu poleno cercano de suddur i fioli cristiani et tirrorli alla setta di Macometto, perche essendo voi cristiano, et alloggiando Turchi non dovete cura delli fioli cristiani che vengono in casa vostra, acciò non siano sudditi a negar il santo battesimo?"

Muslim lands.⁸⁹ In January 1591, Andrea Negroni appeared before the tribunal to report that a woman called Camilla, who rented rooms to Muslims in the S. Severo parish, had informed him that the Turk Celebin Ali kept in his room a ten-year-old child that claimed to be a Christian, having been kidnapped by Celebi in Constantinople. The boy asked Camilla's help to escape in order to remain Christian. Negroni added that he had decided to seek the Holy Office's intervention, which "was in charge of similar cases". The tribunal moved to investigate the case and some days later, its bailiff, Girolamo reported that he had managed to find the boy and take him from the Turk's room. Later, before the Inquisition the boy claimed that his Christian name was Pietro and his Turkish Cossain, he was from Russia and after having been taken from his parents he was sold to his present master in Constantinople.⁹⁰

Investigation into Turkish ships or places that Muslims used as temporary residence in Venice often came under the Holy Office. In July 1591, the bailiff Girolamo Vitriario inspected some Turkish vessels after having obtained information that Giorgio, a former Muslim, had fled there. The bailiff reported that although he had not found the person he was looking for, he came across another Giorgio, an Armenian boy, a former Muslim, who was hiding himself in the vessel, wearing a headgear "in the Turkish way" and probably waiting for the departure of the ship. The boy was arrested and sent to the prisons of the Holy Office.⁹¹

During the 1580s and 1590s, the Holy Office's measures to prevent any possible exportation of Christian children to the Ottoman lands by conducting thorough investigations into Turkish vessels become so constant and regular that cases of abuse also appeared. In 1580, the Inquisition was informed about Giovanni Pisani, a former Jew, who, pretending that he had been authorised by the tribunal, inspected the Turkish vessels that were about to depart and extracted money from the

⁸⁹ "Commendatur Inquisitor Venetiarum qui obtinuit ... fieri posse [?] perquisitionem in navibus Turcarum, ne pueros Christianorum ad Turcos conducant pro fidem abneganda", quoted in Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 162, n. 24.

⁹⁰ ASV, SU, b. 67, proc. "Celebin Ali", test. Andrea Negroni, 19 January 1591; report Girolamo, 5 February 1591; test. Pietro, same day.

⁹¹ ASV, SU, b. 68, proc. "Giorgio alias Turco", report Capitaneus Hieronimus Vitriarius, 13 July 1591: "hieri di mattina a bon hora son andato sopra un schierazzo de turchi per cercar Giorgi altre volte Turco fatto christiano, et non l'ho trovato, ma ho trovato un'altro putto de età de anni 12 in 13 nominato Zorzi Armeno il qual era fatto turco, et poi christiano, il qual era nel detto schierazzo de turchi con un faciol attorno la testa al modo de turchi, et cusi l'ho retenuto, et messolo nelle preggioni del santo officio".

ship captains. Giacomo, an Armenian merchant, testified that Pisani had told him that the Holy Office had given him licence to search the ships so that Turks who had become Christians did not flee. Pisani impeded any departure of ships without his licence and when he gave his permission it was in exchange for money. Later, when Pisani was arrested and appeared before the tribunal, he admitted his unauthorised activities, adding that he had also investigated any suspicious movements of Marranos or Jews converted to Christianity.⁹² Interestingly, the Inquisition dropped the case and demanded he acknowledge his misbehaviour. The tribunal focused mainly on Pisani’s practice that brought “the Holy Office into disrepute by suggesting that it might have agents who sought to exact payments from departing merchants”, but showed some favour towards his interest in investigating possible exportation of Christian converts to the Levant to revert to Islam.⁹³

Although the Inquisition mainly shouldered the task of handling cases of alleged exportation of Christians, occasionally other magistracies initiated investigations. In August of 1642, the Podestà of the Venetian town of Rovigno, Istria, was informed that a woman called Lucia had been found hidden in a ship which had departed from Venice some days earlier. Lucia was a former Muslim from Bosnia and had received baptism in Dalmatian Zara (Zadar). Lucia was arrested with two Muslims, Soliman and Relep from Sarajevo. Soliman testified that while he was about to depart from Venice, the Muslim Cain had asked him to consign Lucia to her parents at Spalato (Split). Later, the case passed to the Venetian Governor of Dalmatia, who finally sent Lucia and Soliman back to Venice for investigation. Meanwhile, the Senate authorised the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia to investigate the case. Lucia testified before the Savii that after baptism she had been entrusted to a Venetian *gentilhuomo* named Francesco, who brought her to the tutor Lucietta in

⁹² Processi (1571 – 1580), 123 – 24: “e molte volte [Giovanni Pisani] me ha mostrato danari che portava in mano dicendo: “Questa sera ho guadagnato questi doi ducati!” Et alle volte più e mi ha mostrato doi cechini alla volta. Ei dictum che dica il modo che detto Ioan Pisani diceva haver guadagnato detti danari, respondit: Mi diceva che questo Santo Offitio gli haveva licentia di poter cercar tutti li navilii acioè che li Turchi fatti Christiani non scampa via e lui ha detto de sua bocca che impediva che li navilii non partisse senza sua licentia e quando gli dava licentia lui pigliava danari ”; 126: “Ei dictum che chiarisca perché nominasse el Santo Offitio et quel che operasse in ditte nave, respondit: A veder, signor, che sorte de zente andava via, se andava via [Marani o Hebrei fati Christiani] queste sorte de zente et metteva paura al patron de ordine del Santo Offitio che non dovesse andar via fino che non se guardava chi andava et chi non andava”.

order to learn Italian and sewing. One day, Lucietta cunningly took Lucia to the Fondaco dei Turchi, where some Muslim relatives waited for Lucia. The Turks paid Lucietta and her husband for their service and kept Lucia locked in a room of the Fondaco for some days before giving her to Soliman to take her back to Spalato.⁹⁴

The Holy Office intervened not only in cases of Catholics, native-born or converts, but also when non-Catholic Christians had such relations with Muslims that they could prove dangerous for their moral conduct. Thus the tribunal exercised its authority as the defender not only of Catholicism from dissenters but also of Christianity from the threat of non-Christians and infidels. In December 1581, Girolamo D'Idina denounced Paolina Briani, who ran an inn for foreigners in the S. Giovanni Nuovo parish, for having sexual relations with a resident Turk, Ussain, and acting as a procuress providing the Turk with prostitutes. Briani's home appeared as a dangerous place for the young men frequenting it. Among the immodesties committed at Briani's home, the denunciator included that the Turk kept a young Armenian Christian, Gregorio, whom he intended to take to Turkey to convert.⁹⁵

The Inquisition's officer Girolamo Vitriario, who lived close to Briani's home testified that it was rumoured in the neighbourhood, that the Turk intended to

⁹³ Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 281; Processi (1571 – 1580), 127 – 28 : "et, quando pure havebbe havuto licentia se qualche christiano se partisse per Levante per farse tucho, non doveva perciò usar extorsioni con pigliar danari [et arme]".

⁹⁴ ASV, Avogaria di Comun, Miscellanea Penale, b. 343, fascicolo 15, letter of the Podestà of Rovigno; test. ship captain and Soliman; test. Lucia in Rovigno, n. d.: "Constituto di Lucia figliola del signor Bradulcit del regno di Bossina fu Turco. Disse esser Christiana battezzata nella chiesa di Santa Stocia nella città di Zara che prima era Turca che già un mese in circa è stata inviata in questa Città [Venezia] per ordine dell'eccellentissimo General di Zara che li fu posta di una tal Lucietta, acciò imparasse a cacire, et la lingua italiana"; test. Lucia before the Cinque Savii, 15 August 1642: "Che capitò in casa de un gentilhuomo che ha nome Francesco che non sa la sua casata ne dove stia che quel gentilhuomo la mandava ogni giorno da un mistra con una gondola [...] che un giorno quella mistra che haveva nome Lucietta li disse se voleva andar con lei a S. Marco ... et la menò al Fontego de Turchi che ghe giera di Turchi la che subito che la vedero ghe messero un fazzoletto in bocca, acciò che non cridasse".

⁹⁵ ASV, SU, b. 47, proc. "Paolina Briani", den. Girolamo D'Idina, 29 December 1581: "Questo dice uno Denuntiante qual vuol esser tenuto secreto mosso da pura carita, et dalla religione christiana che hoggi di si attrova allozare in casa de paulina Briana albergatrice de Turchi sta in corte Nova a San Zuane novo, uno Turco nominato Ussain de Tecat, dal qual con il mezo di detta paulina e vien commesso in detta casa molti enormi peccati et scelleratezze, oltra che dorme, et ha pratica carnale con lei paulina, lei è ancho mezana de condurli in casa altre meretrice, con le qual lui Turco ha similmente pratica carnale, et che più sono veduti andare, et capitare in detta casa puti, et garzoni de diverse sorte [...] Et oltra cio da lui Ussain Turco è stato li giorni passati disviato soso de un Navilio che era per partire per Narente uno armeno giovane sbarbato Nominato gregorio, christiano pero, et quello ha condotto in detta casa, dove mangia, beve et dorme con lui turco al costume de turchi, mangiando carneil venerdi, et sabbato. Intertenendo detto puto fino se parti di questa città di condurlo seco per farlo far poi Turco"; the case is also briefly discussed from a different viewpoint in, Chojnacka, *Working Women*, 99 – 100.

take away the young Armenian in order to make him Muslim. The Armenian Arachiel gave grounds to the tribunal for taking the case into serious consideration. He confirmed that Gregorio was a Christian and, as some other Armenians had informed him, the Turk was to take the young man with him in Turkey. Besides, Arachiel added that Christian Armenians were not allowed to be in the service of Muslims and the Turk could not have anything else in mind but bringing his servant to Islam.⁹⁶

Such information was sufficient for the Holy Office to conclude that Gregorio was in danger and order his arrest. However, some days later, before the tribunal Gregorio, alias Cichor, presented a different version of the story. He confirmed that he had been born into a Christian family. He had been in the service of several Turks for the last three years. His first master was one Murat with whom he stayed for three years; Gregorio entered the service of Murat, after his father had consigned him in exchange for his debts to that Turk. Later, Gregorio became servant of the Turk Ussain, with whom he had been in Venice at the time of the denunciation. It seems that for Gregorio serving the Turks, after his initial obligation, become a permanent employment. The Turk Ussain, in a request to the Holy Office to reclaim his servant, clarified that he had taken Gregorio from his first master in Venice and the agreement with Gregorio was to pay him a salary of twenty ducats per year and finally, take him back to his father in a place called Siurisar, near Ankara.⁹⁷ It is important to note that

⁹⁶ ASV, SU, b. 47, proc. "Paolina Briani", test. Girolamo Vitriario, 29 December 1581: "Dicens Interrogatus la in quella corte da me se dice pubblicamente [...] che qual turco mena via quel zovene armeno a farsi turco"; test. Arachiel, last day of December 1581: "Respondit: lo conosci ditto giovine qui in Venetia che è di eta de 17 anni che non hera barba che è cristiano armeno nato di padre e madre cristiani ma non sa il nome del detto giovine el qual sta in corte nuova sopra l'habitation di Hieronimo official di questo santo officio. [...] questo giovine si è posto al servir di questo altro turcho ma è contra la nostra legge cristiana santa [...] che uno cristiano possi star a servitio di un turcho et ha sentito de bocha de pedro armeno et balli da liopoli dir questo turcho vuol menar questo giovine con esso in turchia [...] et che questa cosa ghe ha despiasisto per esser lui armeno et essendosi perche non puol esser se non per farlo far turcho".

⁹⁷ Ibid., test. Gregorio, 2 January 1581: "Respondit: io son cristiano et cristiano voglio morire ma son stato al servitio de turchi 3 anni el primo fu morat turcho 3 anni perche mio padre haveva debito con questo turcho di 60 ducati [...] et doppoi sono stato un mese con Moola [he is the Turk Ussain] turcho qui in Venetia et mi ha dato 20 cechini che mene son vestito"; Undated letter of Ussain: "Gieronimo d'Idina, per divertir se poteva, et potrà il giudicio delli clarissimi signori di notte al Criminale, innanti a quali Io Osain Turco ho querellato, un'assassinamento fattomi nella faccoltà col il mezo di alcune scritture turchesche, si è immaginato di travagliarmi co'l mezo di questo santo officio, et mi ha fatto l'altra sera levar di casa il mio garzone chiamato Chico Armeno, il quale partito da un luogo lontano tre giornate d'Angori dimandato siuriasar, venne in questa Città, come servitore di un altro Turco nominato Achmat di Botmalat, il qual Turco essendosi partito per il paese, lo accordai per mio servitore detto garzone, con salario di venti ducatti all'anno, et con patto di ricondurlo nel paese, et consignarlo al padre suo, in siurisar".

by Venetian standards, Gregorio was a relatively well-paid servant. Judging from the way he had entered the Turk’s service, Gregorio appeared to have been an inscribed employee; but he earned more than an inscribed servant and even a salaried one in Venice.⁹⁸

In this view, there was an obvious divergence between the cultural norms that governed the master-servant relationship between the Turk and Gregorio and their perception by the Venetian tribunal. As a result, the story that Gregorio and his master presented did not conform to the Inquisition’s views and it ordered Gregorio to be assigned to some Armenians, who lived in the “house of Armenians” in the S. Zulian parish and stay under their protection until some Armenian Christian was found and take Gregorio back to his relatives in Siurisar.⁹⁹

The 1581 investigation offers a rare insight into the hierarchy of crimes that preoccupied the Inquisitor and the way he evaluated and classified offences. Girolamo de Idina’s denunciation was against both Paolina Biani for her sexual relations with the Turks she hosted (rather the accusation concerned mainly her) and the Armenian Gregorio. Nonetheless, the Holy Office, without receiving any information in favour of Biani, did not seek to verify the accuracy of the accusation against her. The Inquisitor gave priority to the dangers that Gregorio that moment ran, overlooking the accusations against Paolina. The Inquisitors probably were used to malicious gossip and suspicions about people, such as innkeepers, who came into everyday contact with non-Catholics or non-Christians.

Some years later, in 1587, Paolina Biani was again accused with her sister Samaritana Biani, this time of magic practices, by Samaritana’s husband Francesco Leoncino. Witchcraft also concerned an earlier accusation of 1582 that the Inquisition dropped. However, in 1587, when Theodora Bolzari appeared as a witness, the Inquisitor, apart from the questions that had to do with the accusation,

⁹⁸ Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft*, 138 – 41.

⁹⁹ ASV, SU, b. 47, proc. “Paolina Biani”, 11 February 1581: “Constituindi nel santo officio thomaso armeno quondam cruch Arziron et Ioanne quondam Stephano de persia habitanti nella casa di Armeni in contra di san zulian hano tolto di loro gregorio Armeno fiol del q Murat el qual soleua star con ussain turcho el qual lo ha licentiat et è andato alla casa deli armeni predetti de havergente bona custodia et far chel non torni sin con turchi et quanto prima havevano opportunita di consignarlo a qualche christiano armeno che lo condular alla sua patria et lo consegnì sui parenti nelle citta di siuriassar”

asked her whether Paolina and Samaritana had had sexual relations with Turks or even had children as the result of those relations.¹⁰⁰

Some days later Paolina Briana came to testify. The Inquisitor together with his main questions on witchcraft turned the interrogation to the allegations of Briani's relations with her tenants, asking whether those Turks and Greeks lived according to their rites, and whether she had sexual relations or children with them.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, whereas Briani refuted flatly that charge, the interrogator made a final attempt at the end of the deposition to clarify her relations with the foreigners. Asked whether she cooked meat for the Turks and the Greeks on Fridays and Saturdays, Briani firmly responded: “No sirs, they cook their own food, and they cook better than women”.¹⁰²

It seems that the Inquisitor did not miss the opportunity to clarify an earlier accusation, in case the 1581 hearing could come together with the new charge and make it stronger. The handling of the 1587 accusation is indicative of the method that the Inquisitors employed, particularly when someone came before the tribunal as defendant more than once. Obviously, before each hearing, the Inquisitor had conducted some preliminary research into past cases, bringing previous accusations to light or understanding how earlier Inquisitors had acted in similar charges. In the 1587 accusation against Paolina Briani, the Inquisitor's questions on the dietary customs of the Turks and Greeks she hosted, and her involvement in the preparation of their lunches on the Catholic fast days, were also found in the trial fifteen years earlier against Francesco de Dimitri and his family, who also ran an inn for Muslims and Greeks. The Inquisitor had asked Giulia, Francesco's wife, what the Muslim merchants, who lived at their inn, asked for dinner and who cooked for them, and Giulia, like Briani, answered that the Turks cooked by themselves.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. (the dossier of 1581 trial includes all investigations into Briani), test. Theodora Bolzari, 10 November 1588: “Ei dictum se sa che le dette Paulina et Samaritana habbino da far carnalmente con alcun Turco, et che di loro ne habbino havuto alcun figliuolo”.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., test. Paolina Briani, 12 November 1588: “Ei dictum se questi turchi, et grechi, che lei alberga in casa vivono secondo il rito loro, et se essa constituta ha mai havuto figliuoli con alcuno di essi et se con loro ha mai havuto commertio carnale et con quali”.

¹⁰² Translated in Chojnacka, *Working Women*, 99.

¹⁰³ ASV, SU, b. 35, proc. “Contra Georgium alias Turchum”, test. Giulia, Saturday 22 August 1573: “Ei dictum che cosa vi mandò il Turco a donar de cena quella sera. [...] Ei dictum chi cucina al Turco? Respondit: loro”.

As in the hearings involving alleged crypto-Jewish practices, the witnesses who came before the Inquisition to report or simply testify on someone’s alleged passage from Christianity to Islam applied a number of criteria to explain and justify their anxiety or establish the evidence they furnished. It should be noted that in the second half of the sixteenth century, there was a flourishing printing activity in Venice regarding the Ottoman Turks. Histories, travel accounts, costume descriptions with the proliferation of accessible printed portraits of the Turks, sought to classify and foster specific stereotypes but also make the image of the Turk more familiar; “they were made of bones and flesh like you”, as Francesco Sansovino, author of several works on the Turks, patriotically addressed to the Christian soldiers of Lepanto in his 1570 illustrated tract on the war.¹⁰⁴

In this light, it is interesting to analyse what witnesses perceived as Turkish signs on the level of everyday interaction with persons suspicious of lapsing to Islam. In 1583, Felix, a guardian in the Piazza S. Marco reported that when he had gone to the islet of Poveglia, near Lido, to investigate the disappearance of the neophyte Tommaso d’Angori, he found him there under a mound of cloths, wrapped up in a heavy piece of cloth and his arms pinioned. Tommaso was dressed like a Turk having his beard and hair shaved. Other witnesses who had accompanied Felix to Poveglia, the Greek Domenico Giovanni, and Silvestro confirmed that Tommaso had been found dressed in the Turkish way with a turban on his head, wearing a green garment as a coat, clean-shaven and with his hair cut.¹⁰⁵

Some years earlier in 1573, Andrea Barbaro, who accused Francesco de Dimitri of facilitating the exportation of former Muslims, among those Giorgio, the servant of Antonio Falier, informed that Giorgio, when he escaped to De Dimitri’s home, was dressed in Christian clothes. Some days later, the Turks, who sheltered

¹⁰⁴ On portraits, B. Wilson, “Reflecting on the Turk in late sixteenth-century Venetian portrait books”, *Word & Image*, 19, 1-2 (2003): 38 – 58; on Venetian literature on the Ottomans, Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 245 – 325; on Sansovino’s works, E. Bonora, *Ricerche su Francesco Sansovino. Imprenditore, librario e letterato* (Venice, 1994), 97 – 137; on signs of crypto-Judaism, 6 – 35.

¹⁰⁵ ASV, SU, b. 51, proc. “Tommaso d’Angori”, report of Felix ‘capitaneus plathee’, 15 April 1583: “son andato a Ponegia per trovar un turcho fatto christian credo che lhabbi nome Thomaso... lo ricercai diligentemente et lo trovai sotto un monte di drappi rivolto in una filzada che lhaveva ligado li man et era vestito da turcho et haveva la barba rasa et li capelli”; test. Domenico Giovanni, during the interrogation of Tommaso, same day: “el qual thomaso era vestito da turcho con dulipan in cao et con una vesta verde raso il capo et la barba”; test. Silvestro, 21 April 1583: “detto thomaso el qual era vestito da turcho de color verde con un turbante in testa con la testa rasa”; test. Giacomo, same day: “et trovai che detto thomaso... haveva il capo raso vestito alla turchescha con casacha verde”.

him, took off his Christian clothes, dressed him in the Turkish manner, by putting on his head a red headgear, and shaved his hair off. Giorgio himself, ashamed of his shaved hair, hesitated at returning back to his master and Francesco de Dimitri agreed to help him by taking him back to Antonio Falier.¹⁰⁶

In 1591, Girolamo Vitriario, officer of the Holy Office, reported that having found the Armenian Zorzi, already baptised as a Christian, on a Turkish vessel with a kerchief around his head in the Turkish style, he arrested him and put him in prison.¹⁰⁷ Some years earlier, in 1584, the same officer had tried to establish whether Domenico, alias Sciaba, from the town of Modone, who had been a papal slave, was a Christian, who had gone to Venice in order to find the means to escape to the Ottoman lands. Vitriario reported that having asked him whether he was a Muslim or Christian, Domenico responded that he was a Muslim. Vitriario remained doubtful reproaching him that the Turks did not wear the clothes Domenico did. Subsequently, he sent Domenico to prison and only then the suspect revealed that he was a Christian. Other witnesses, the Greek Domenico, and the former Muslim Tommaso d'Angori, agreed that the inconsistency between Domenico's answer that he was a Muslim and his Christian dress indicated his suspicious identity.¹⁰⁸

For most witnesses and accusers, clothing and hairstyle constituted the most sound and standard sign of someone's passing from Christianity to Islam. In their eyes, dressing style was a primary and fundamental mark that distinguished

¹⁰⁶ ASV, SU, b. 35, proc. "Contra Georgium alias Turchum", undated letter of Andrea Barbaro: "dopo [Giorgio] esser stato ancora un' altro giorno in habito di christiano, il quarto giorno lo fecero rader ad un turco, gli cavorno li habiti christiani, et lo vestimo alla turchesca, mettendolo una tachia rossa in capo, et una della veste del medesimo turco attorno"; first test. Giorgio, 16 August 1573: "il patron di essa casa [Francesco] mi condusse un sabbato mattina dal Clarissimo Patron mio over li andai mal volentieri per esser raso da vergogna"; test. Francesco de Dimitri, 20 August 1573: "et cosi [Giorgio] lui mi disse mi aggrizzò andar in casa del mio patron cosi radato, et cosi mi li dissi, se vergogni per questo andemo non dubitar"; second test. Giorgio, 21 August 1573: "Respondit: li [Francesco] dissi che anderia volentiera, ma per esser raso me vergognava di andar".

¹⁰⁷ ASV, SU, b. 68, proc. "Giorgio alias Turco", report of Girolamo Vitriario, 13 July 1591.

¹⁰⁸ ASV, SU, b. 53, proc. "Sciaba Domenico", test. Girolamo Vitriario, 15 March 1584: "condussi a casa mia questo [Domenico] qui presente li dimandai se era turcho o cristiano lui me response... son turcho et io li dissi li turchi vener in questo habito alhora io el missi preggione et lui alhora dissi di esser cristiano"; test. Domenico, 18 March 1584: "sono 3 o 4 di chel Hieronimo official del santo officio ci venirso che li ostrassimo quel schiavo fatto cristiano in Roma ghe lo nostrano thomaso d'angori fatto cristiano et io et cosi raggionendo lo conducessimo verso la casa del ditto Hieronimo el qual...li dimando se lui era cristiano quello response non son cristiano son turcho et Hieronimo li disse perche porti questi drappi da cristiano"; test. Tommaso, same day: "Ad opportunam Interrogationem sono 3 o 4 di in circa io me trovai con dominico griego un dominico gia turcho chiamato sciaba e andassimo a raggionando con Hieronimo di questo santo officio et Hieronimo dimando a questo dominico fatto cristiano in roma se era cristiano lui response di no ma che era turcho Allora Hieronimo gli dissi se tu sii turcho perche vai vestito a questo modo".

Christians from Muslims. Abandonment of Christian clothes and adoption of those that were recognised as Muslim together with the new haircut, marked someone's intention to leave the Christian lands for the Muslim territories, which simultaneously meant apostasy and conversion. In 1631, Francesco Campanile gave notice to the Holy Office that two Spaniards, the friar Giovanni and the soldier Giovanni, had entered the Fondaco dei Turchi. There they dressed themselves like Turks and had their hair cut. A couple of days later the Turks transferred them to their vessel in order to flee to Turkey. There, according to the denunciator, "they intended to renegade and apostatise from the Holy Catholic faith and embrace the Muslim sect". For another witness, Francesco from Naples, the new clothes of the two suspects and their presence in the Fontaco, were strong pieces of evidence to regard them as having already turned Muslims. Asked whether he was able to understand the reason for his examination by the tribunal, Francesco replied outright: "I think that my interrogation has to do with that Spanish Augustinian friar who became Turk, and another Christian, a Spanish soldier, who became Turk too."¹⁰⁹

The perception of outward appearance as a connotation of Otherness had been widespread, and culturally dominant and it was shared not only by the delators and witnesses, who sought to make their cases well documented and reliable but also by the officials of the Holy Office. Some of the most suggestive portrayals of the Muslim Other have come down in the official descriptions that the Inquisition's notary compiled at the beginning of each interrogation. The following are indicative: "After having been summoned from prison appeared [before the Holy Office] a certain man high of stature, with brown face, black beard, dressed as a layman just like a soldier, with a red cap on his head and about forty years old. His head appears to have been shaved, (only) with a piece of hair along at the top of the head, according to the Turkish custom". "After having been summoned from prison,

¹⁰⁹ ASV, SU, b. 88, proc "fra Giovanni Fecondo", den. Francesco Campanile, 22 May 1631: "Gianni andò alla casa dei turchi per mezzo el traghetto di S. Marcuola, ove fu vestito da turcho, et tagliatoli li capelli conforme al loro stille; et poi doi giorni sono il frate pure anch'esso è andato nel medesimo casamento de turchi, ove havendosi spogliato l'habito religioso è vestitosi da turco, ambidua sono stati condotti dalli altri turchi alla Galera della mercantie che stà per partire da Venetia con diversi turchi, in compagnia d'alcuni altri turchi per guidarli poi in turchia, et per quanto stimo, per renegar et apostatar dalla santa fede cattolica et abbracciare la setta maomettana"; test. Francesco, same day: "Interrogatus se si può imaginare la causa del presente esame. Respondit: m'imagino dover esser esaminato per quel frate dell'ordine di S. Agostino, spagnolo che si ha fatto turcho, et anco di un'altro soldato christiano pur spagnolo che si è fatto turcho".

[appeared before the Holy Office] a certain young man, wearing Turkish clothes, with his head utterly shaved, without beard, of ordinary height, and apparently about twenty four years old".¹¹⁰

For the witnesses and defendants, the strong and unambiguous message that someone's appearance conveyed constituted a field of rivalry between the two conflicting religions, as each one tried to win victories, even of symbolic nature, over the other. Many testimonies reflect that attitude. According to witnesses, the Turks zealously attempted to enforce the adoption of their clothing style on those who had either decided to follow them or moved around them hesitantly. In 1584, Tommaso d'Angori testified that Domenico, alias Sciaba, who had tried to flee from Venice to the Ottoman lands, had told him that the Turks, who had agreed in helping him, wanted to shave his hair and beard, whereas he had asked them to wait until their vessel was ready for departure.¹¹¹ In 1590, Giorgio Aly testified:

when I saw one of the governors of the Catecumeni looking for me at the S. Giorgio dei Greci church, I left from there because I did not want to go back to the Catecumeni. Later, not knowing where to go, I found some Turks who against my will put on me the headgear.¹¹²

Nevertheless, what the witnesses perceived as the constant and provocative attempt on behalf of the Turks to win Christian souls into their "sect", even within Venice, for the Turks who got involved in those cases such practices must have been nothing more than the necessary measures that had to take to protect themselves and those who had trusted them within the unfriendly environment of Venice.

Be that as it may, the Inquisition documents allow insights mainly into the Christians' attitudes and perceptions. The change in clothing and hairstyle which was

¹¹⁰ ASV, SU, b. 88, proc. "fra Giovanni Fecondo", test. Bartolomeo Derera, 24 May 1641: "eductus de carceribus comparuit quidam homo alte status, cum facie olivastra, cum barba nigra, indutus habitu laicali fere militis, cum biretto rubeo in capite demonstrans etatem annorum 40 in circa cui inspecto capite, fuit visus abrasus, cum pauca quantitate pillorum oblongorum in sumitate capitis, more turcarum"; test. fra Giovanni Fecondo, same day: "eductus de carceribus quidam iuvenis quadam veste turcica inductus, abrasus in qualibet parte capitis sine barba, stature ordinarie, etatis ut apparet 24 annorum in circa".

¹¹¹ ASV, SU, b. 53, proc. "Sciaba Domenico", test. Tommaso d'Angori, 18 March 1584: "et [Domenico] disse che essi turchi li volevano rader la barba et la testa et che lui non haveva voluto perche anchora non era in ordine el navilio con el qual lui voleva partir per andar in turchia".

¹¹² ASV, SU, b. 66, test. Giorgio Aly, 8 May 1590: "et andai alla chiesa de greci ... et perche venne uno de Governatori de cathecumeni li, dubetando che me conducessero li, me ne fuggi, et perche non sapeva dove andar, me ne andai tra turchi, li quali per forza me messero la sessa in testa".

strong evidence of a Christian’s lapsing into Islam, needed to be remedied by other Christians quickly and effectively to avoid further troubles and scandal. So in 1583, Tommaso d’Angori, after having been taken back from the island of Poveglia, where the Turks hid him, was entrusted with his belongings to the Armenian Giacomo. Giacomo kept Tommaso at his home for a couple of days and then sent him to stay in Padova “until his hair get longer”.¹¹³ While the witnesses were still in Poveglia, a first initiative took place that redressed Tommaso’s misconduct and reconstituted the right order. With an action, imbued with symbolism, Silvestro removed the Turkish turban from Tommaso’s head, threw it to the ground and put on his own Christian hat urging Tommaso to follow them back to Venice. Giacomo, the Armenian, who was not aware of Silvestro’s action, when first saw Tommaso, was surprised at the paradox he had before his eyes:

I found Tommaso with the Christian hat on his head, which was shaved, and he was dressed like a Turk with a green cloak on him, but Silvestro told me that it was he who had put on [Tommaso’s] head the Christian hat.¹¹⁴

Although signs of change in someone’s outward appearance were the most constant evidence of misconduct, the witnesses and accusers unfolded additional pieces of information that were of equal importance. Contacts with Turks in Venice constituted an adequate starting point for denunciation. In 1584, the accuser of Domenico, alias Sciaba, gave notice that he and some other Armenians, had seen Domenico some days ago, before the churches of the Piazza S. Marco asking some Turks for assistance in order to escape to Turkey.¹¹⁵ In 1580 Felix Perla, Prior of the

¹¹³ ASV, SU, b. 51, proc. “Tommaso d’Angori”, test. Domenico, 15 April 1583: “le qual robbe havevano dato al ditto Iacomo armeno et cosi ancho esso thomaso el qual è stato un di o doi a casa sua doppo detto Iacomo lha mandato a padoa acio che gli cressessoro li cavelli”; test. Silvestro, 21 April 1583: “et lo [Tommaso] menassimo a venetia et pigliassimo le so robbe de galera che era una peza di panno di scarlato et un riolo che furono consignati al deto Iacomo desiderando esso thomaso di star in casa sua fin che li ritornavano li capelli”.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., test. Silvestro: “detto thomaso el qual era vestito da turcho de color verde con un turbante in testa con la testa rasa et io li pigliai il turbante lo butai in terra et li messi la mia baretta et li dissi che venisse con noi”; test. Giacomo: “silvestro et Ioanne andarno sopra io restai basso poi anchora io andai sopra et trovai che detto thomaso haveva la baretta di cristiano in capo che me disse silvestro che ghe lhaveva messo et haveva il capo raso vestito alla turchescha con casacha verde”; on external appearance as a sign of crypto-Judaism, 6 – 14.

¹¹⁵ ASV, SU, b. 53, proc. “Sciaba Domenico”, den. 13 March 1584: “Esser venuto in questa città un turcho fatto cristiano in Roma chi era schiavo del Papa il quale cerca di tornare in turchia et saper di bocha di esso fuggitivo chel s’e battizzato in Roma et esser di Modon o di Choron et questo è stato avanti le ghiese di S. Marco za 7 o 8 zorni presente Lazaro de scis et cristophoro d’Andonna Armeni

Catecumeni, informed the Inquisition that Cornelia, a former Muslim, sought the assistance of the Catecumeni because her husband, Nicolao, also a convert, had kept company with some Turks, whom he had also brought to their home. When Cornelia reproached him, he beat her and gave her to understand that in a couple of days he would depart for Turkey.¹¹⁶

The announcement of a trip to the Ottoman lands was often viewed with suspicion and anxiety. In 1580, Giovanni Maria, the priest of the SS. Gervasio e Protasio church, anxious about his younger brother, who had expressed his wish to go to Turkey without any specific purpose, asked for the intervention of the Holy Office.¹¹⁷ A year earlier, Giovanni Battista Granni was called before the tribunal to give information about the conduct of Luigi Buzio from Orvieto, whom he hosted at his home. Granni testified that Buzio had revealed that he had quarrelled with his uncle and he wanted to escape to Constantinople to become a Turk and have many wives. He had also declared that he would like to become a corsair, to kill and hang Christians by the neck.¹¹⁸ The Inquisitor was alerted by the accusations and ordered Buzio's arrest. Buzio denied that he would carry out what he had said, but the Inquisitor asked him how the tribunal and his accusers would be sure that he told the truth. Finally, Buzio was released and declared that he would not go to the "infidels' lands" on bail.¹¹⁹ Nonetheless, even the simple intention to travel to Turkish territories or knowledge that someone had sometime lived in non-Christian territories remained a good reason for suspicion and accusation. In 1632, the anonymous accuser of Giuseppe Strupiolo, who had fled to Turkey after a quarrel with a

et anche giorgio armeno et ha visto dicto fuggitivo a cercar elemosina dei turchi [...] che [Domenico] vuol tornar in turchia et che domandando danari dai turchi per andarsene et a questo me son trovato presente".

¹¹⁶ ASV, SU, b. 46, proc. "Nicolao et Cornelia alias Turchi" [the case is not registered in the Sant'Uffizio Index 303], report of Felix Perla: "Essendo doi turchi fatti cristiani marito et moglie nominato il marito Nicolao la donna cornelia essa cornelia è venuta secretamente nella nostra congregatione zobia prossime passata et ha fatto intender come el ditto suo marito ... mena a casa sua turchi et conversa con loro et perche essa sua mogier vuol ripretrendar ditto marito li da dele bastonate et di piu ha fatto intender che fra dui giorni esso nicolao vuol andar in turchia".

¹¹⁷ ASV, SU, b. 46, proc. "Giovanni Maria" [the case is not registered in the Sant'Uffizio Index 303]: "ho un mio fratello... et ha havuto a dire chel vuol andare in turchia et io son venuto a far saper questa cosa a questo Santo Officio over chel proveda".

¹¹⁸ ASV, SU, b. 45, proc. "Luigi Buzio", test. Giovanni Battista Granni, 23 April 1579: "vene da Roma questo Alvise butio et vene ad allozar in casa mia et io li dimandai perche era venuto et lui mi disse che si era partito de Roma sdegnato con suo zio per gire in Constantinopoli per farsi turchi... et voleva andar in Constantinopoli et pigliar moglie et divintar corsaro et amazar dei cristiani et farli apicar per la golla".

¹¹⁹ Ibid., test. Buzio, 5 May 1579.

Venetian noble, said that Strupiollo “since his return from Turkey a year ago, he lives as a Turk”.¹²⁰

More pieces of evidence that indicated alleged attachment to Islam were drawn from what was supposed to be the proper conduct of a good Christian. In 1580, Cornelia gave notice to the Congregation of the Catecumeni that her husband, Nicolao, ate meat on Friday and Saturday and he also avoided communion and confession, despite her exhortation. Also, Felix Perla, the Prior of the Catecumeni, confirmed that even to his admonition for confession, Nicolao was always negative by responding that he would sometime go to confession, although, as he claimed, he had no sins to confess since he had never killed anyone or stolen anything.¹²¹ In 1632, Giuseppe Strupiollo was also accused of consuming meat on Friday, Saturday and during Lent, despising the sacraments and abhorring the churches. Giacomo Mariperto, having been asked whether Strupiollo lived as a Muslim, answered: “Rumour has it that he lives as a Turk because he never goes to churches, at the Rialto he mixes with Turks and talks with them in Turkish”.¹²²

As in the Jewish accusations, dietary customs constituted a standard sign of identifying the Catholic community, recognising the Other and subsequently spotting any possible deviance. In her second trial in 1587, the innkeeper Paolina Briani, stated roundly:

These Turks and Greeks that stay in my house for a while, the Greeks do according to the Greek custom and the Turks according to the Turkish custom, so that the Turks eat meat on Friday and the Greeks on Saturday.¹²³

¹²⁰ ASV, SU, b. 89, proc. “Giuseppe Strupiollo”, anonymous den., 27 April 1632: “[Strupiollo] il qualle cosi ardito, et temerario che arbadonando la fede catolica che da uno anno in qua circa che tornato di Turchia mantiene vita da Turco”.

¹²¹ ASV, SU, b. 46, proc. “Nicolao et Cornelia alias Turchi”, report of Felix, 27 August 1580: “et [Cornelia] ha fatto intender come el ditto suo marito mangia carne venere et sabbati [...] et di piu essa cornelia ha ditto chel ditto nicolao non vuol ne confessarsi ne comunicarsi se ben lei piu volte lha esortato [...] Et ad Interrogationem dixit: io ho exortato piu volte questo nicolao a confessarsi et mi ha risposto sempre che accade che me confessa ne non ho preicati mi non ho robato ne amazato nessun”.

¹²² ASV, SU, b. 89, proc. “Giuseppe Strupiollo”, den., 27 April 1632: “mangiando carne cosi di Venere, come li Sabati, et quadragesima vigilie sprezzandoli santissimi sacramenti abhorendo le santissime chiese”; test. Giacomo Maripetro, 11 May 1632: “interrogatus se sa che il sopradetto faccia vita da turco, et non viva da cristiano. Respondit: lui ha fama di far vita da turco, perche non va mai in chiesa, in Rialto pratica con turchi, et parla con loro alla turchesca”.

¹²³ Translated in Chojnacka, *Working Women*, 100.

Similarly clear was the testimony of Francesco de Dimitri's wife, Giulia, who observed the eastern rite: "The Turk eats meat all days, whereas we eat meat neither on Wednesday nor Friday".¹²⁴

In 1581, Girolamo d'Idina who asked for the intervention of the Holy Office to prevent the alleged exportation of the young Armenian, Gregorio, stressed that Gregorio ate, drank and slept with the Turk Ussain, as the Turkish custom was, and consumed meat on Friday and Saturday. Girolamo Vitriario testified that one Friday or Saturday he had seen Gregorio with the Turk sitting at the same table on which there were some pieces of meat and some eggs. Asked whether he had seen Gregorio consuming meat, Vitriario replied that he had assumed it, since Gregorio and the Turk were together before the same table. Another witness made the same assumption; Arachiel testified that he had never seen Gregorio eating meat on fast days but, according to the witness, it could not have been otherwise since the servant usually ate what the master did.¹²⁵

Although the Inquisitor required an unambiguous indication of consumption of meat and not just assumptions, and he persisted in asking whether Girolamo Vitriario himself had ever seen Gregorio eating meat on Friday or Saturday, deviance in dietary customs constituted a strong evidence of suspicion for him too. Later, when Gregorio came before the tribunal, one of the few questions he was asked was whether while he had been a servant of the Turk, he had eaten meat on Friday, Saturday and other fast days.¹²⁶ Some years earlier, in 1573, in his investigation into the extent to which Giorgio, the servant of Marc'Antonio Falier, had come in contact with the Muslims, who hosted him, the Inquisitor asked Giorgio whether he had consumed meat on fast days. Later, probably bearing in mind the particular Muslim dietary customs and foods that were prohibited to Muslims, the Inquisitor demanded

¹²⁴ ASV, SU, b. 35, proc. "Contra Georgium alias Turchum", test. Giulia, 22 August 1573: "Lui [the Turk] magna carne ogni zorno, et noi non magnemo carne, ne de mercore, ne de vevere".

¹²⁵ ASV, SU, b. 47, proc. "Paolina Briani", den.: "quello [Gregorio] ha condotto in detta casa, dove mangia, beve, et dorme con lui turco al costume de turchi, mangiando carne il venerdi, et sabbato"; test. Hieronimo Vitriario, 29 December 1581: "et cosi io andai [to the house of the Turk] et mi ricordo che era un zorno di venere o di sabbado et visti la tolla pare chiuda et dela carne de mango et un pezzo de gallina et visti che a questa tavola era sentudo un zovene de 18 anni ... el puto et loro doi erano sentudi alla dita tavola et non altri [...] Interrogatus [respondit:] alla dita tavola non era pesce se non carne solamente come ho ditto et anche del uova"; test. Arachiel, last day of December 1581: "circa el mangiar dele carne io non ho visto niente ma è vivi simili chel servitor faza quel che fa el patron et che quel che manza el patron manza el servitor".

further clarifications of what Giorgio ate while he had been with the Turks, asking him what sort of meat they had consumed and whether they had drunk wine.¹²⁷

In 1584, Girolamo Vitriario, who as an Inquisition officer might have been more aware, drew on the Muslim dietary customs, and arrested Domenico, alias Sciaba, for having been a Christian, who was about to depart for the Turkish territories. One witness, Tommaso d'Angori, clarified that the officer Vitriario arrested Domenico when he was informed that the suspect had eaten pork and drunk malvasia wine.¹²⁸ In the same vein, many years later, in 1649, another Inquisition officer reported that having asked the prisoner Giovanni Battista, alias Salaman Assolomamuto, who was suspected of crypto-Muslim practices, what he would like to eat, Giovanni Battista said that he wanted some *salado* [salted], which the officer, to his amazement because it was Friday, understood as salted meat. However, it seems that later, Giovanni Battista, who wanted to demonstrate that he was a Muslim, realised the misunderstanding and the implications that might have had for the perception of his identity, and clarified that he meant salted sardines. Indeed, in his testimony, the officer demonstrated how dietary customs shaped the perception of religious identity and clarified ambiguity, as he said: "I know that the Muslim law prohibits the Turks from eating the Christian *salado*, which is made of pork meat".¹²⁹

Identifying a Christian's impending lapse into Islam and producing well-documented depositions, the witnesses and accusers employed a range of images and stereotypes of the Other, which were drawn from the Catholic collective imaginary and anxiety that depicted the Muslims, their religion and social practice pervaded by viciousness, cruelty and moral laxity, with particular emphasis on sexuality, attributing to them the pursuit of lust with the practice of polygamy and

¹²⁶ Ibid., test. Gregorio, 2 January 1581: "Ei dictum se mentre è stato al servitio di questo turcho el venere et sabbado et altre vegilie ha magnato carne".

¹²⁷ ASV, SU, b. 35, proc. "Contra Georgium alias Turchum", test. Giorgio, 16 August 1573: "Interrogatus se ha magniato carne de vener e di sabbato"; second test. Giorgio, 21 August 1573: "Ei dictum che cosa manzaste? Respondit carne. Ei dictum che carne? Respondit carne de manzo. Ei dictum bevesti vin. Respondit signor non".

¹²⁸ ASV, SU, b. 53, proc. "Sciaba Domenico", test. Tommaso d'Angori, 18 March 1584: "Allora Hieronimo disse vien qua che ti magneva un porcho di biechroto et bevivai malvasia et cosi lo messe preggione".

¹²⁹ ASV, SU, b. 105, proc. "Salaman Assolomamuto", test. bailiff of the Inquisition, 1 June 1649: "et so cha la legge di macometto prohibisse alli Turchi il mangiar il salado de christiani entrandovi carne di porcello, prohibitali in ogni tempo".

homosexuality.¹³⁰ In 1593, in his *Relazione* read before the Senate, the *Bailo* in Constantinople Lorenzo Bernardo, after having outlined the Ottomans' administration, military organisation and foreign policy, did not miss the chance to refer to the Turks' lecherous customs: "The laxity of the Turkish way of life, the voluptuousness of Turkish women and the corruption of the renegades have the power to transform a saint into a devil".¹³¹ In the same vein, in his 1573 letter to the Inquisitor, describing the ceremony of his servant Giorgio's conversion, the noble Andrea Barbaro stressed that after the Turks had shaved Giorgio's head and changed his clothes, "that same night the Turk took Giorgio to sleep with him, caressing him".¹³²

Not always so explicitly stated, the suspicion of homosexual practices ran through many testimonies. In 1583, Domenico informed the tribunal that Tommaso d'Angori after his baptism had rented a room at the S. Giorgio dei Greci area. While he stayed there a Muslim relative of his visited him with whom Tommaso "had talked, eaten, drunk and slept". Later, a Muslim *chiaus* [Çavuş(?), usually meaning an Ottoman representative; it is likely that an official emissary to Venice was also involved in trade], the same person, who tried to take Tommaso back to Turkey stayed with him. Domenico testified: "Tommaso mixed with him, eating and drinking, but I do not know whether he had slept [there]".¹³³ Interestingly, the Christians, who associated with Tommaso and later took him away from the Turks in Poveglia, were not worried about Tommaso's continuous contacts (including the implied immodesties) with Muslims in Venice, until his disappearance. Also the Inquisitors shared anxieties about possible immodesties between Christians and Muslims. In 1573, the Inquisitor sought to examine Giorgio's relations with the

¹³⁰ On this dominant Catholic attitude, Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 240 – 3; G. Benzoni, "Il 'farsi turco', ossia l'ombra del rinnegato", in his *Da Palazzo Ducale. Studi sul Quattro – Settecento veneto* (Venice, 1999), 69 – 72; it is interesting that in late medieval and early modern Italy, the derogatory word *bardassa* that was used for deriding sodomized boys was of Arabic origin, M. Rocke, "Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy", Brown and Davis, *Gender and Society*, 167.

¹³¹ Translation mine. "Perchè la libertà del vivere turchesco, la lussuria di quelle donne turche, colli corrotti costumi delli rinegati, avriano forza di far di un santo un diavolo": L. Firpo, ed., *Relazioni di ambasciatori veneti al senato*, 14 vols. (Turin, 1965 -), vol. 13, *Constantinopoli, (1590 – 1793)*, 418.

¹³² ASV, SU, b. 35, proc. "Contra Georgium alias Turchum", letter of Andrea Barbaro: "che quella notte dopo esserse raso, et fatto vestir alla turchesca, il turco lo tene a dormir seco facendo le carezze".

¹³³ ASV, SU, b. 51, proc. "Tommaso d'Angori", test. Domenico, 15 April 1583: "mentre che esso thomaso stava a S. Zorzi di grieghi con la dita dona sorazonse suo barba con el qual esso thomaso conversò et manzo et bevuto et dormiva... partito el barba zonzi el chiaus in questa terra et esso thomaso praticava con esso chiaus et manzava et beveva la ma non so se lhabbi dormito".

Muslims and asked him whether he had slept with any of the Turks that hosted him. Similarly, in 1581, the Inquisitor asked information from the witnesses on the dishonest life of the Turk Ussain and his servant Gregorio.¹³⁴

Homosexuality clearly reappeared in the denunciation against Paolina Briani, Ussain and Gregorio. The accuser, Girolamo d'Idina, informed the Holy Office that Ussain at Briani's home had relations with many prostitutes, who Briani herself procured for him. Also D'Idina said that Ussain kept Gregorio as a servant, with whom he ate, drank and slept, as was the custom among the Turks. The Armenian Arachiel also maintain that, although he had not seen it with his own eyes, it was widely rumoured that the Turk had sexual relations with the young man.¹³⁵

Beyond the accusers and witnesses' identification and perceptions of Muslim practices, two seventeenth-century cases involving crypto-Muslim offences serve also as examples of the patterns of inquisitorial discourse and practice and illustrate the paths that the Inquisitor followed when he encountered crimes of dissimulative nature, in the sense that the accused maintained his/her non-Christian adherence, whereas the Inquisitor strove to prove the suspect's Catholic affiliation. In 1584, interrogating the former Muslim Domenico Sciaba, the Inquisitor easily established that the accused had received baptism. In his testimony, Domenico said that he had been born into a Muslim family in Modon (Methoni), a former Venetian colony in the Peloponnese. Domenico gave his Christian name but also his Muslim one, Sciaba, and it was that piece of evidence that prompted the Inquisitor to ask the accused why he had changed his name. Domenico admitted that he had received baptism in Rome after he had been captured as a soldier on a Turkish ship. To the Inquisitor's insistence that he had come to Venice to depart for Turkey, Domenico unsuccessfully maintained that he had left Rome seeking employment. Finally, the Inquisition sentenced Domenico to the galleys as an apostate.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ ASV, SU, b. 35, proc. "Contra Georgium alias Turchum", test. Giorgio: "Interrogatus si ha dormito con ditto Turco o con altri"; SU, b. 47, proc. "Paolina Briani": "Interrogatus se sa o ha inteso a dire che detto turcho con detto cristiano armeno habbi tenuto vita deshonestà".

¹³⁵ Ibid., den.: "lei [Paolina Briani] è ancho mezana de condurli in casa altre meretrice, con le qual lui Turco ha similmente pratica carnale [...] [Gregorio] mangia, beve, et dorme con lui turco [Ussain] al costume de turchi"; test. Arachiel: "Respondit: circa la vita deshonestà io non ho visto niente con li miei occhii ma credo et così ho inteso dire per pubblica voce et fama che questo turcho usa carnalmente con dito iovine".

¹³⁶ ASV, SU, b. 53, proc. "Sciaba Domenico", test. Domenico, 15 March 1584: "mi chiamo domenego son nato a modone et son di età di 37 in 38 anni...io era soldato in una galera del turcho et io quando fu preso era turcho nato de turcha et haveva nome sciaba da modon mio padre haveva nome Morat. Ei

It was in 1631 that the tribunal's first encounter with suspects of crypto-Muslim adherence took place. A denunciation by Francesco Campanile from Apulia, a barber in Venice, reported that the friar Giovanni and the soldier Giovanni from Spain had entered the Turks' Fondaco, where they dressed as Turks and had their hair cut, "according to the Turks' style", and were about to depart with a Turkish vessel.¹³⁷

The Inquisition ordered the suspects' arrest and soon began the interrogations. Upon his appearance before the tribunal, the first suspect declared that his name was Mustafà and was a Muslim from Granada [*turco granatino*]. His false Christian name was Bartolomeo but he had never received baptism. He was a sewer but mainly earned his living as a soldier in the service of the King of Spain. The Inquisitor Girolamo Zappetti da Guinzano showed the suspect some of his belongings that the tribunal had seized, and asked him to explain why if he was a Muslim, he carried with him a cross and a rosary. Bartolomeo replied that he had carried the cross for fear of being punished because the Moriscos were not allowed to live in Spain.¹³⁸ Bartolomeo's Christian belongings made the Inquisitor reluctant to accept that the accused was a Muslim and asked him how he could prove that he was not a Christian. Bartolomeo replied that he just followed what all the crypto-Moriscos did:

All those Muslims from Granada live in the same way, because otherwise they would be punished. Some of us carry Christian symbols and go to Mass on Sunday against their will, just to be taken for Christians. But I am not a Christian.¹³⁹

dictum per che ha mutato nome chiamandosi hora domenego, perche io son battizzato in Roma in S. Pietro già doi anni questa Epiphania prossime passata"; sentence, 18 March 1584.

¹³⁷ ASV, SU, b. 88, proc. "fra Giovanni Fecondo", den. Francesco Campanile, 22 May 1631; the case is briefly discussed from a different point of view in, Wilson, "Reflecting on the Turk", 49.

¹³⁸ ASV, SU, b. 88, proc. "fra Giovanni Fecondo", test. Bartolomeo, 24 May 1631: "Io mi chiamo Mustafà turco Granatino, ma come christiano finto mi chiamo Bartolomeo essendo io senza battesimo. Mio padre si chiama mustafà che è vivo in Constantinopoli, mia madre si chiama Fattima [...] Interrogatus se gli sia stata ritrovata cosa alcuna adosso quando fu preso, dal Capitanio del Santo officio. Respondit, mi trovò un centurino, una corono et croceta, et una boletta della sanità di Verona [...] Interrogatus perche causa portava adosso la croce et la corona con la medaglia, se era turco come egli dice et non cristiano. Respondit, le portava per complimento per non esser castigato in Spagna, perche vi è pena la vita a morischi che stanno in Spagna".

¹³⁹ Ibid., "Interrogatus come potrà provare che egli sia turco et non cristiano, havendoli segni et l'habito da cristiano. Respondit, tutti li Granatini caminano cosi, perche andando in altro modo sarebbero castigati, et alcuni de nostri portano adosso reliquie, et sentono messa le domeniche per forza per parer cristiani. Io non son cristiano".

The Inquisitor continued pointing out the inconsistencies in Bartolomeo's behaviour:

He [Bartolomeo] was asked why upon his arrival in Venice, he did not declare himself a Muslim and go to the place where the government of the city allows the presence of Turks, but he continued to appear as a Christian, apart from the last days that he was about to depart for Turkey?

The accused declared that he had continued to appear as a Christian because he thought that the situation in Venice was the same as in Spain.¹⁴⁰ Finally, the Inquisitor announced that the accused had to give more pieces of evidence, otherwise the tribunal would consider him a Christian, who sought to go to Turkey to abandon the Christian faith and revert to Islam. Consequently, Bartolomeo attempted to distance himself from anything Christian and in particular, from sacramental adherence:

I do not know what the Christian faith is. It is true that the Granada Muslims were forced into baptism, but they practised the deception of getting a child baptised many times pretending that the child was not baptised. My mother told me that I was not baptised, but she practised that deception and had another child baptised instead of me.

However, the Inquisitor did not accept Bartolomeo's story and said that it was not believable that the Spanish clergy showed such negligence, especially since in that country the laws concerning baptism were so strict.¹⁴¹ Indeed, in Spain there was a serious concern about the birth and baptism of Morisco children, and pregnant Morisco women were under Christian midwives' strict surveillance.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., "Interrogatus perche causa non se sia mostrato di esser turcho subito che è venuto in Venetia, ove si trovano dei Turchi tollerati dalla serenissima signoria per i degni rispetti, ma ha seguitato sempre da mostrare cristiano [...] Respondit, pensavo che qui fosse come in Spagna, et così restai finche m'informai".

¹⁴¹ Ibid., "Et sibi dicto che non mostrando altra ragione o altro segno che egli sia turco, il santo officio pretende che egli sia cristiano, et che hora volesse andare in turchia per lasciare la fede cristiana et abbracciare la setta maometana per farse turco. Respondit, io non so che cosa sia fede cristiana. è vero che turchi granatini sono astretti a battezzarse, ma usano questo inganno, che mandano un figliolo ad esser battizzato più volte con fingerlo che sia il figliuolo non battizzato. et mia madre mi disse che io non son stato mai battizzato, me che usò questo inganno di mandar un altro figliuolo a battizzarse in luogo mio. Et sibi dicto che non è credibile, che li sacerdoti della spagna usassero tanta negligenza di esser delusi così frequentemente come egli dice, ma essendo do natura astuta et accorta, molto bene volessero sapere chi erano li figliuoli quali essi battizzavano, essendovi li ordini così stretti et rigorosi in quel Regno in quei tempi, et in tale negozio".

¹⁴² Lea, *A History of the Inquisition*, 3: 380.

The Inquisitor mainly focused on Bartolomeo's Christian conduct. He asked him if he knew Christian prayers and continued to press the accused that he should reveal the truth because everyone in Spain was Christian. The only non-Christian sign the Inquisitor examined was whether Bartolomeo was circumcised.¹⁴³ On the other hand, Bartolomeo gradually abandoned arguments that could show his Muslim adherence and resorted to the firmness of his inward belief. In this view, the accused admitted that he was not circumcised because no Morisco was circumcised, as all were forced to live as Christians, that he knew the paternoster because he was forced to and went to confession and communion three times annually in the presence of his Spanish master. But, later Bartolomeo declared that it was his inward adherence that counted: "But I am not a Christian in my heart. [Inwardly] I lived as a Muslim but for security I lived as a fake Christian".¹⁴⁴

On the same day, another accused person was brought for interrogation. As with Bartolomeo, he declared that his proper name was Maometo but was also called Zuane. He was a Granada Muslim and was not baptised. However, suddenly, without any intervention from the Inquisitor, the interrogated changed his deposition. He confessed that he had been baptised in Barcelona and his name was Stefano. At the age of thirteen he entered the S. Agostino monastery in Barcelona and as a friar he was called Giovanni Fecondo. He had left Spain for Rome. He found himself in Venice at the time of the plague and, as he could not remain at the S. Stefano monastery, he went around Venice asking for charity. Finally he met Giovanni Lopez from Madrid, who took him to "the Ghetto, that is, the Turks' house". There he declared himself a Muslim from Granada, who wanted to go to Turkey to find his family, had his head shaved, wore a green Turkish headgear and assumed the name Maometto.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ ASV, SU, b. 88, proc. "fra Giovanni Fecondo", test. Bartolomeo, 24 May 1631: "Interrogatus se in quelle parti usavano li turchi Granatini a circoncidere li loro figliuoli [...] Interrogatus se esso sia circumciso [...] Interrogatus se sa il Paternostro, et l'Ave Maria".

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., "Respondit, ma non restano [i.e. Christian] di core. Ho vissuto come turco, ma per compimento ho vissuto cristiano finto"; on crypto-Muslim identity and practices among Spanish Moriscos, M. E. Perry, "Moriscos and the Limits of Assimilation", in *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain. Interaction and Cultural Change*, ed. M. Meyerson and E. English (Notre Dame, Ind., 2000), 277 – 80; on the defence strategy of inward religious adherence and the Inquisitor's view, see 74, 90 – 101, 106 – 7, 165 – 68, 186 – 91.

¹⁴⁵ ASV, SU, b. 88, proc. "fra Giovanni Fecondo", test. fra Giovanni, same day: "Il mio proprio nome è maometo. Io non tengo battesimo, et mi fecevo chiamar Zuane, mio padre si chiamava Alece Vassà, et la madre Iosuna, son Granatino da Tortosa [...] Et melius cogitans ex se dixit, Io voglio confessare

On the other hand, Bartolomeo, when later again called for interrogation, continued to insist that he was a Muslim and he fashioned a double identity, despite the tribunal's warning that it had reached a conclusion about his conduct:

[*Bartolomeo*] *answered*: Sir, I am a Turk from the nation of Granada and I came to Venice to depart for Turkey [...]

It was said to him that the holy tribunal holds that he tells the truth as far as his wish to go to Turkey from Venice is concerned, but it believes that he does not tell the truth denying that he is a Christian, because the facts and signs he has shown during his life demonstrate that he is really a Christian and not a Turk.

[*Bartolomeo*] *answered*: It is true that I said that I have lived as a Christian but only as far as the ceremonies are concerned, in the same way that other Muslims from Granada live.¹⁴⁶

To Bartolomeo's insistence, the tribunal sought information on his Christian conduct by the friar Giovanni.

Some days later, another man spontaneously appeared before the tribunal. He said that his name was Giovanni Lopes, he was a soldier from Madrid and wanted to confess a grave offence he had committed. Having found himself in hardship, he entered the Turks' Fondaco, where he declared that he was a Muslim from Granada. There he adopted the Turkish style by having his hair shaved and leaving a wisp of hair along the middle of his head. The Turks covered his expenses and promised to take him to Turkey. According to Lopes, he had met fra Giovanni Fecondo in prison after he was condemned by the Inquisition and then he decided to confess his fault. He found a confessor, who told him to go to the Inquisition.¹⁴⁷

Finally, some days later, a third interrogation of Bartolomeo took place. Earlier, the bailiff of the Inquisition had reported that Bartolomeo after his second interrogation, had complained to him that it was only the Inquisitor who conducted the interrogation and the other judges did not speak and threatened that if he did not

et dire la verità chiaramente. Et fino adesso ho detto il falso, perche veramente io son cristiano battizzato nella cathedrale di Barcelona".

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., second test. Bartolomeo, 27 May 1631: "Singori si, dico che son turcho Granatino di nazione venuto a Venetia per andar inanti in turchia[...] Et sibi dicto che il santo tribunale tiene che dica la verità quanto alla volontà che haveva di andar in turchia da Venetia, ma pretende però che non dica la verità negando di esser christiano, perche li fatti et segni da esso mostrati tutto il tempo di vita sua dinotano che egli sia veramente cristiano et non turco. Respondit è vero che io ho detto di haver vissuto da cristiano come per cerimonia nel modo che li altri Granatini vivono".

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., test. Giovanni Lopes, 5 June 1631.

manage to take his revenge against the Inquisitor, someone else would do it. However, in the third session, Bartolomeo abandoned his previous defence strategy. He recognised his fault and confessed that he had always been a Christian and because he could not find a way to leave Venice he decided to approach the Turks in the Fondaco and pretend he was a Muslim from Granada.¹⁴⁸

Whatever the truth behind the depositions of the three offenders, the way the Inquisitor conducted the trial reflected the policy which had been followed many years ago in trials of Iberian crypto-Jews. Though he never explicitly stated it, but perhaps aware of the expulsion of Moriscos in 1609 – 10, the Inquisitor was reluctant to accept that persons of Iberian origin were nothing else but Christians or they had never received baptism. Finally, the sentences, which the tribunal inflicted on the three accused persons, were indicative of the formalisation process that inquisitorial procedure had undergone over the years.¹⁴⁹ All the suspects were required to perform a formal abjuration *de vehementi*. Giovanni Lopes, who spontaneously confessed his fault, received a re-educating sentence of spiritual penance and eight days in prison; fra Giovanni Fecondo, who quickly changed his deposition and confessed, was sentenced to an eighteen-month galley service; Bartolomeo, who was firmer to his initial defence strategy, was sentenced to the galleys for three years.¹⁵⁰

A similar pattern of inquisitorial practice reminiscent of sixteenth-century crypto-Jewish cases, emerged in a trial involving crypto-Muslim adherence in 1649. After a denunciation by Girolamo, Prior of the Catecumeni, that Giovanni Battista, a former Muslim, who allegedly had been baptised in Malta, was about to depart for Ragusa and then revert to Islam, the Inquisition ordered the suspect's arrest. Girolamo had received information on Giovanni Battista from some Armenian merchants. However, the accused person's identity remained vague, as Girolamo reported that he had heard that Giovanni Battista was dressed as a Christian and visited churches.¹⁵¹

The Inquisitor began the investigation apparently having already been convinced by the witnesses that Giovanni Battista was a Christian, as in the sole

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., test. Bartolomeo, 12 June 1631: “il timor di dio mi ha mosco il core per il quale ho fatto ricercare di esser esaminato perche Io ho peccato [...] io son cristiano, et sempre ho vissuto da cristiano”.

¹⁴⁹ On formalisation of procedure and sentences see 193 – 94.

¹⁵⁰ ASV, SU, b. 88, proc. “fra Giovanni Fecondo”, sentences, 31 May, 5 and 17 June 1631.

interrogation that took place, the accused was asked to take an oath at the beginning. However, the accused immediately declared that his name was Salaman Assolomamuto from Rhodes and he was a Muslim. He was a wool merchant when he was captured on board by the Knights of Malta. Later he was sold to the *Cavallier* Fabio Gori from Siena. After seven years at the service of Gori, Assolomamuto escaped and reached Venice, where he sought to earn his living by entering the service of some Muslim merchants and later depart for his homeland.

By making use of the pieces of information he had earlier gathered, the Inquisitor Giovanni Battista Raimondo from Brescia directed the accused to reveal his identity by asking him how he was dressed and what he carried with him in Venice. As Assolomamuto replied that he was dressed as a Christian and carried a sword, the Inquisitor pointed out the inconsistency of being a Muslim with the appearance of a Christian. To Assolomamuto's insistence, the Inquisitor pointed out that on several occasions the accused had reportedly said that he was a Christian and received baptism in Malta.

For the Inquisitor, baptism was the necessary piece of evidence that would prove Assolomamuto's apostasy. The Inquisitor did not summon again the accused for interrogation, but wrote to the Inquisitor of Siena to investigate if the accused had ever received baptism. After a while, the Inquisitor of Siena sent a copy of the interrogations he had conducted. Interestingly, Nicolò Gori, brother of Assolomamuto's master, confirmed that the accused had escaped but never received baptism.¹⁵² Despite his master's admonition, while having been a slave, Assolomamuto “lived as a Turk and said that he wanted to die a Turk”.¹⁵³

Evidently, the two mid-seventeenth-century trials against crypto-Muslims illustrate the patterns of inquisitorial discourse and practice having already appeared in the trials against crypto-Jews in the second half of the sixteenth century and gradually crystallised. Despite the differences between the two offences, the common point that

¹⁵¹ ASV, SU, b. 105, proc. “Salaman Assolomamuto”, den. Girolamo, 30 March 1649.

¹⁵² On the baptism of Muslim slaves, see below 174 – 75.

¹⁵³ Ibid., test. Salaman Assolomamuto, 3 August: “che dica in che maniera era fosse vestito quando era qui in Venetia, et che cosa portava seco. Respondit andavo da cristiano. Portavo un giappon de [.] giallo, braghezze negre, ferrarol negro. Capello negro. Lassando la spada à casa, qual spada havevo portato a Venetia, era spada longa, et haveva una zazera postizza. Interrogatus à che fine et effetto,

emerges was that appearing as a Christian signified Christian adherence. Despite their obscure past, for individuals from Italy and Spain, Christian appearance and conduct presupposed sacramental affiliation to Christianity through baptism. In this view, the Inquisitor’s task was to focus on baptism or find evidence that would prove it.¹⁵⁴ For those offenders of Iberian origin baptism and Christian adherence were indisputable. Finally, when doubts might have arisen, instead of pressing the offender to confess, the Inquisitor could reach a conclusion by relying on the network of inquisitorial tribunals to provide him with the necessary proofs.

essendo, come egli disse, Turco, andasse vestito da cristiano, et portasse la zazzera postizza”; letter 3 September: “In tutte l’occasioni sudetto Assà visse da Turcho e disse voler morir da Turcho”.

¹⁵⁴ See 83, 100 – 2, 110, 119.

Crossing Religious Boundaries in Venice: Christian and Muslim Converts

In October 1592, a young man, dressed as a Muslim, according to the notary's description, appeared before the Inquisitor of Venice. Introducing himself, he said:

I am Demetrio, son of Lecca Bagga and Maria from the island of Negroponte, and I was born on that island; I lived with them in the Christian way because I was baptised and they lived as Christians following the Greek rite and my father was Albanian and my mother Greek, and it has been twelve years since I was taken from my father in the town of Egrippo as the Turks took the child tithe [...]

Bagga served as a *sipahi* [*spai*] that is, a cavalryman, member of the provincial administration of the Ottoman Empire, in the area of Dervigni in the Morea, with an annual income of more than nine thousand *akçe* [*aspri*], a fairly high income compared to the average revenue (three thousand *akçe*) of sixteenth-century *sipahis*. Bagga was a typical example of a *devşirme* recruit (the system of manning the Ottoman administrative and military mechanism with the levy of Christian children from rural areas). According to his testimony, he had been taken from his village in Negroponte (Euboea) to Constantinople, where he had converted to Islam and entered the service as *acemî oğlan* [*Zamòglano*] that is, a novice in the page-school of the Ottoman Palace. Later he was sent to the Morea.¹ What was untypical with him was the abandonment of his office, and his travel through the Ionian Islands

¹ ASV, SU, b. 69, proc. "Demitrio Bagga": "Io sono demitrio figlio di lecca bagga, e di Maria dell Isola di negroponte, et son nato in detta Isola, e con loro ho vissuto christianamente perche io ero batizato et loro vivevano alla christiana conforme al rito greco che mio padre era Albanese et mia Madre greca ma perche li Turchi decimano li putti, io fui levato da mio padre gia dodici anni sono, nella citta di Egrippo [...]"; on the careers of *devşirme* children and *sipahis*' revenues, H. Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300-1600*, trans. N. Itzkowitz and C. Imber (London, 1973), 78 – 9, 82, 107 – 16.

to reach Venice, where he approached the Inquisition and asked to re-embrace Christianity.

Bagga's case was not unique, though. Bagga was among the first to appear before the Venetian ecclesiastical authorities seeking reconciliation with the Church. Venice, a transit city in the early modern Mediterranean, either as an *entrepôt* or as a point of departure from Europe to the Levant and vice versa, was also an important hub of religious border crossing, as shown in previous chapters. From the late 1580s up to the mid-seventeenth century, the ecclesiastical institutions of Venice received Christians, who had sometime converted to Islam, and native-born Muslims from the Ottoman Empire, all of them seeking to embrace Catholicism and leave behind their past, in most cases a troubled one.² The words of Felice Magalotti alias Samuel Levi, an obscure Jew from Salonica who had converted to Islam at a young age in his hometown, and was brought before the Inquisition for apostatising from Christianity in 1629, might also stand for the motives of many prospective Christian and Muslim converts: "When someone becomes a Muslim in those lands [the Ottoman Empire] it is not possible to return to Judaism unless he/she comes to Venice. To this aim, after a year I came to Venice to turn Jew".³

By drawing on several individual cases, this chapter examines the way the Venetian ecclesiastical authorities dealt with prospective converts, takes a close look at the lives of converts as narrated by the converts themselves, seeks to cast light on the hitherto neglected issue of conversion of native-born Muslims to Christianity and to discuss aspects of the process of conversion across the early modern Mediterranean.⁴

² The terminus of 1580s results from the Inquisition itself as from that period it takes over the cases of prospective converts (see below 180 – 84). Besides, during the same period Venice witnessed an increasing presence of persons from the Ottoman lands; see, 137 – 43.

³ Processi (1608 – 1632), 103.

⁴ More attention has been paid to the process of conversion accompanied by large-scale islamisation in the Ottoman Balkans. For a recent evaluation: J. V. A. Fine, "The Medieval and Ottoman Roots of Modern Bosnian Society", and C. Heywood, "Bosnia Under Ottoman Rule, 1463 – 1800", in *The Muslims of Bosnia – Herzegovina. Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, ed. M. Pinson (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 1 - 54. However, little is known about the majority of converts, with the exception of a few individuals who succeeded in reaching high offices, such as, for instance, the Grand Vizier Mehmed Sokullu (Sokolovic) from Bosnia: R. J. Donia and J. V. A. Fine, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (New York, 1994), 45 – 48. The sources (for instance, tax registers) that have come down allow mainly quantitative studies. For a different approach though for a later period: S. Deringil, "'There Is No Compulsion in Religion': On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire: 1839-1856", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42, 3 (2000): 547 – 75. Besides, the issue has often been approached in a distinctive

Converts and Venetian Institutions

In Venice conversion to Catholicism took an institutionalised form by the establishment of the *Pia Casa dei Catecumeni* [House of Converts] and via the Inquisition. Within the general reorientation of its activity and the wider range of offences that came gradually under its scope, especially from the late 1570s, individuals of Catholic or Orthodox past, who had converted to Islam, and saw the Inquisition as the medium for their (re-) admittance to the Catholic Church, or just their return to Christianity, made their early appearance in the records of the Venetian tribunal.⁵ As a general rule, and by contrast to the Catecumeni, the Inquisition accepted for entrance to the Catholic Church those individuals who had already received baptism, either as Catholics or not.

The Catecumeni hosted Jews and Muslims who wished, or were forced, to convert to Catholicism. Initially founded by the Jesuits in Rome in 1543, the Catecumeni gradually spread throughout Italy.⁶ Although the primary target seems to have been the winning of converts from Judaism, as time went by the Catecumeni took over the centralisation and institutionalisation of baptising Muslim slaves - a process that previously took place at a parochial level⁷ - with a special interest in

ideological manner: F. Bieber, "Muslim Identity in the Balkans before the Establishment of Nation States", *Nationalities Papers*, 28, 1 (2000): 21 – 5; Conversion in the wider Mediterranean context has recently attracted a renewed interest: B. Bennassar, "Conversion ou reniement? Modalités d'une adhésion ambiguë des chrétiens à l'islam (XVI^e-XVII^e siècles)", *Annales ESC*, 6 (1988): 1349 – 66; idem, "Frontières religieuses entre Islam et chrétienté: l'expérience vécue par les 'renégats'", in *Les Frontières Religieuses en Europe du XV^e au XVII^e siècle*, ed. R. Sauzet (Paris, 1992), 72 – 78; idem, "Conversions, esclavage et commerce des femmes dans le peninsules iberique, italienne ou balkanique aux XIVE et XVIIe siecles", *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 2 (1996): 101 – 9; R. C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters. White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500 – 1800* (Basingstoke, 2003); L. Scaraffia, *Rinnegati. Per una storia dell'identità occidentale*, 1st ed. 1993 (Rome and Bari, 2002).

⁵ Individuals who were born to Protestant or Calvinist families from northern Europe, or Catholics who switched to Protestantism also approached the Inquisition for reconciliation. Several *processi* are found in ASV, SU, b. 86, 88, 97, 98. See also Black, *Early Modern Italy*, 202 – 3, citing, for Venice, ASV SU b. 103, 'Joannis Jons. Q.Jois. De Sazonia, 24 March 1639', and 'Fugarola Lodovico', 10 July 1646. Jesuits and Capuchins encouraged the recognition of conversion via the Inquisition.

⁶ W. Rudt de Collenberg, "Le baptême des Musulmans esclaves à Rome aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, I. Le XVII^e siècle", *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 101, 1 (1989): 9 – 181; idem, "Le baptême des Musulmans esclaves à Rome aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, II. Le XVIII^e siècle", *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 101, 2 (1989): 519 – 670.

⁷ M. Luzzati, "Schiavi e figli di schiavi attraverso le registrazioni di battesimo medievali: Pisa, Gemona del Friuli, Lucca", *Quaderni Storici*, 36, 2 (2001): 349 – 62; I. Origo, "The Domestic Enemy:

providing these converts proper instruction in Catholicism, which previously was either neglected or in Christian masters' hands.

Established in 1557, in the early years of its operation the Venetian branch hosted mainly Jewish converts, but from the 1570s Muslim converts entered increasingly.⁸ The rate was to change substantially in the first half of the seventeenth century when the Muslim neophytes had been the overwhelming majority.⁹ In the years after the wars of Cyprus and Lepanto, a number of Muslim converts may have been slaves who were taken to the Catecumeni by their Venetian masters. However, later, and especially in the seventeenth century, prospective converts mainly appeared at their initiative. Venetian masters continued to bring their slaves to the Catecumeni for instruction and baptism, as, for instance, the merchant Francesco Salvarezza, who in 1593 brought a ten-year-old Muslim slave from Bosnia, having earlier been bought from another Venetian from the Uskoks in Senj. In the same year, the noble Zuanne Diedo brought to the Catecumeni a young Moor from Cairo, whom Diedo had bought from a Greek in Canea.¹⁰ However, in sixteenth-century Venice, domestic service mainly relied on free labour and no longer on slaves.¹¹

Compared to the situation in other branches, the spontaneous appearance of prospective native-born Muslim converts was a unique feature of the Venetian Catecumeni. In Rome and Bologna, the Catecumeni worked almost exclusively on the basis of state and privately owned slaves. Out of one thousand and seventy-five Muslims that received baptism in the seventeenth and eighteenth century Roman Catecumeni, only sixty-one were not slaves.¹² The situation was similar in the small Catecumeni of Bologna.¹³ However, the records of the Venetian Catecumeni allow us to identify those individuals, who converted at their own initiative and those few who were brought by their masters.¹⁴ Apart from individual converts, the Venetian

The Eastern Slaves in Tuscany in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries", *Speculum*, 30, 3 (1955): 334 – 36.

⁸ Pullan, *The Jew of Europe*, 248, 255 – 77; In the years 1590 – 4 the number of Jewish and Muslim converts was equal: ACPV, BdC, B 1590 – 1594, u. d.

⁹ ACPV, BdC, B 1616 – 1675.

¹⁰ ACPV, BdC, B 1590 – 1594, u. d.

¹¹ Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft*, 90 – 3, 128 – 29.

¹² Rudt de Collenberg, "Le baptême I. Le XVII^e siècle", 24.

¹³ R. Sarti, "Bolognesi schiavi dei "Turchi" e schiavi "Turchi" a Bologna tra Cinque e Settecento: Alterità etnico-religiosa e riduzione in schiavitù", *Quaderni Storici*, 36, 2 (2001): 437 – 71.

¹⁴ In cases of prospective converts who were slaves the documents clearly refer to them as slaves [*schiavo*]. As slaves can be identified also converts registered as being brought to the Catecumeni [*fu*

Catecumeni hosted families of converts too. In 1592, the fifty-year old Mustafa from Andrianopolis (Edirne) appeared in the Catecumeni with his ten-year-old son, both being completely unaware of Italian, as the notary wrote. A year later, the brothers Bubacco and Humar with their sister Chatul from Aleppo were admitted in the Catecumeni.¹⁵

The Venetian authorities in frontier colonies, where the ideology of Christian-Muslim rivalry was strong, welcomed the conversion of Muslims. The Venetian officials in Zara (Zadar) took measures in 1578 to protect the nineteen-year-old Mehemet, later baptised Giovanni Battista, from Sarajevo.¹⁶ In 1640, having escaped from her Muslim husband in Darnis (Drniš), the Muslim Assiela, the later Christian Lucia, from Sarajevo, took refuge in the house of a Venetian official in Sebenico, and later she was baptised in Zara. However, when she faced the threats of her Muslim relatives the Venetian authorities took care to send her to Venice.¹⁷ The Venetian officials were keen to facilitate the conversion of Muslims. In 1590, the Muslim Memet from Negroponte, accompanied by two Orthodox priests, appeared in the Catecumeni with a letter of recommendation by the Venetian Governor of Zante.¹⁸ On other occasions, the Venetian authorities took measures to impose conversion on prospective Muslim converts. In 1590, Aly, a young Muslim from the town of Coron, escaped from the Catecumeni and took refuge in the church of the Greeks in Venice. Later he was brought before the Inquisition. Aly sought to become Christian but in the Orthodox rite. He had received an initial instruction by the Archbishop of Calamata and later he was sent to Zante for baptism. But there the Venetian governor of the island took care of him and sent him to Venice to be fully instructed and properly baptised as a Catholic.¹⁹

Muslims, who frequented Venice, were often subject to pressure by members of the clergy, motivated by conversionist zeal. In 1558, the Patriarchal court summoned the priest Giovanni Travaghino for failing to act properly to persuade a thirteen-year old Muslim to become Christian. To the Patriarchal official's question

portato or fu menato]. On the other hand, as voluntary converts are identified those whom the registers referred to as "he/she came to the Casa..."

¹⁵ ACPV, BdC, B 1590 – 1594, u. d.

¹⁶ ASV, SU, b. 45, proc. "Giovanni Battista di Bossina", test. Giovanni Battista.

¹⁷ ASV, Avogaria di Comun, Miscellanea Penale, b. 343, fascicolo 15 "Lucia Turca fatta Christiana": Letter of the Venetian Governor of Dalmatia.

¹⁸ ACPV, BdC, B 1590 – 1594, u. d.

if he had told anything to the boy and averted him from baptism, Travaghino reported that having seen the boy outside the Patriarchal church, he had not missed the chance to ask the boy to become a Christian, since he realized that the boy's Muslim master had maltreated him.²⁰ In 1569, the papal nuncio in Venice reported that the Jesuits sought to carry out their conversionist programme in remote lands, whereas Venice was a convenient place for the multitude of Muslims arriving in the city.²¹ This climate might explain the escape of the twelve-year-old Christian convert Giovanni de Giuguch from Bosnia in 1629²² and the nine-year-old Caim in 1590 from their Muslim masters.²³

Epitomising some of the ideals of the post-Tridentine Church, the Catecumeni was concerned with winning new souls, the proper instruction of the converts in Catholicism, their subsequent support, and inspection of any misconduct. The officials of the Catecumeni were anxious to eliminate any fraud among converts. Careful in accepting someone in the institution to avoid false or repeated baptisms, the Priors of the Catecumeni examined diligently each would-be convert as the rules of the institution prescribed²⁴, a policy that could hardly produce large-scale results.²⁵ Thus, in 1592, the Prior of the Catecumeni reported that after interrogation the seventeen-year-old Macometo, a prospective convert from Constantinople, had admitted that he had been born into an Orthodox family and received baptism.²⁶

¹⁹ ASV, SU, b. 66, proc. "Giorgio Aly"; see also 139, 178.

²⁰ ACPV, Battesimi dei Cattecumeni [sic] 12 apr. 1563 – 15 nov. 1762, first bundle of documents, u.d.

²¹ A. Stella, ed., *Nunziature di Venezia*, vol. 9 (Rome, 1972), 142 – 43.

²² ASV, SU, b. 87, proc. "Giovanni de Giuguch".

²³ ACPV, BdC, B 1590 – 1594, u. d.

²⁴ *Capitoli, ed Ordini per il Buon Governo delle Pie Case de Cattecumeni, di Venezia, a Cognizione de Signori Governatori delle medeme, ristampati, e raccolti dalli Notatori della Pia Congregazione* (Venice, 1737), Parte terza, Capitolo primo: "Venendo alla Casa da se solo, o accompagnato qualche Turco, Moro, Ebreo, Idolatra, o altro Infedele, sì dello stato Veneto, come d'ogn'altro Dominio ch'inspirato da Dio desiderasse di farsi Christiano, doverà il nostro Priore aprirli la Porta, udirlo, esaminarlo, ed esatamente informarsi del Nome, Cognome, Padre, Patria, età, condizione, ed impiego, come pure dell'intenzione, volontà, e quello potrà per scoprire, se vi fosse qualche simulazione, o qualch'inganno, e se li parerà proprio, e prudente lo trattenirà nella Casa, [...] Doverà subito [the Prior] avisare li Presidenti, e li Visitatori, acciocché ancor Essi andando alla visita inqueriscano dal Cattecumeno lo stesso per incontrar la verità, e scoprire se vi fosse qualche falsità, o doppiezza"; When possible, witnesses were also called to give information about prospective converts. For instance, in 1597, the Greco-Venetian merchant Giacomo and the Jewish merchant Moise from Trikala, were examined about the Muslim Rezeb from Napoli di Romania who wanted to become Catholic: ACPV, Battesimi dei Cattecumeni [sic] 12 apr. 1563 – 15 nov. 1762, the records of the hearing are found in the first bundle of documents; see 178 – 79.

²⁵ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 256.

²⁶ ACPV, BdC, B 1590 – 1594, u. d.

Conversion of Muslims to Christianity is a thorny and largely neglected issue. It is often assumed that in the Ottoman Empire, where mass conversions of Christians took place, where Muslims enjoyed a superior status, and where strict legislation forbade conversion under the penalty of death, Muslims were clearly prevented from lapsing to Christianity.²⁷ However, judging from examples in the Venetian Catecumeni, the situation appears to have been different outside the Ottoman lands. Two examples of converts that reached the Venetian ecclesiastical authorities illustrate the patterns underlining the conversion of native-born Muslims to Christianity. In 1590, Aly a young Muslim from the former Venetian colony of Coron told the Inquisition that he had escaped from the Catecumeni because he did not understand the Italian language and, most important, after having found himself caught in the Catholic conversion mechanism, he could not receive baptism in the Orthodox rite, as it was his aspiration. Aly's insistence on becoming Orthodox Christian resulted from his position within the Orthodox community of Coron where he had been brought up and lived. During the interrogation he insisted: "Baptise me in the Greek rite and do to me whatever you like". Giving an account of his past Aly told the Inquisition: "I do not have parents; my brother is a galley master in Algiers. My parents were Muslims in Coron". Alienated from the dominant religious culture of his community and, in a precarious personal situation, Aly sought to become Orthodox Christian hoping that his new religious identity would help him to integrate into his native community.²⁸

The story of a Muslim called Rezeb from the town of Napoli di Romania (Nauphlio) developed on similar lines, in 1597. In a preliminary investigation about Rezeb the officials of the Catecumeni examined a Jewish merchant from Trikala and a Greco-Venetian from Corfu with whom Rezeb had associated. According to their testimonies, Rezeb had made a long journey to reach Venice. The Greek witness described Rezeb as a Muslim with whom he spoke Greek. Rezeb had expressed his wish to become Christian in Venice and, particularly, to receive baptism in the church of the Greeks. The testimonies pointed to a Muslim who lived in a

²⁷ Deringil, "There Is No Compulsion in Religion", 550 – 1; however, it has been noted that voluntary conversions took place among Muslims with military background in frontier areas, such as Dalmatia: C. W. Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj. Piracy, Banditry and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic* (Ithaca and London, 1992), 73 – 4; see also below 213 – 14.

²⁸ ASV, SU, b. 66, proc. "Giorgio Aly".

predominant Christian environment. Additional information from the Jewish merchant completed the image of Rezeb's precarious position; he had met Rezeb in the town of Jannina associating there with other Muslims and living as "poor and foreigner".²⁹

Both cases feature Muslims who lived as minorities among predominant Christian communities in the Ottoman Balkans. Poverty and personal circumstances further alienated them from the Christian environment making their position precarious. Conversion to Christianity offered these Muslims a chance to escape from their degradation by finding a place in the dominant Christian environment.

After baptism, Muslim converts often strove to find a place in Venetian society, although the majority of them left the city to join military regiments in the Terraferma or Dalmatia.³⁰ The Church lacked a systematic policy on assisting the neophytes to establish themselves socially and financially, although from the end of the 1580s the Catecumeni covered some of the needs of the neophytes with money left by some benefactors.³¹ The Catecumeni was trying to keep a close eye over the converts both during their stay in the institution and after their baptism. Francesco, the former Muslim Alsam, was baptised in September 1590 after a three-month instruction in the Catecumeni. Later, he was sent to stay at the home of Giulio Contarini, who had brought him to the institution. Some months later when Francesco went to work as servant to a merchant Giacomo, the Prior of the Catecumeni still kept a note of him.³² In 1622, it was stipulated that every three months the Catecumeni should keep track of the whereabouts of the institution's "sons and daughters".³³

Converts faced the distrust of their new neighbours or the authorities, who either regarded their conversion as false and superficial, or feared they might still view their past with nostalgia, especially in times of hardship. In such cases, the Holy Office was on stand-by. Accused of divination, Maria da Ponte, alias Ainis, a former Muslim of Christian origin from a Greek island was constantly labelled by her

²⁹ ACPV, Battesimi dei Catecumeni [*sic*] 12 april. 1563 – 15 nov. 1762, first bundle of documents.

³⁰ See 213 – 14.

³¹ Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 258 – 59.

³² ACPV, BdC, B 1590 – 1594: 2 July 1590 / 23 September 1590 / 1 March 1591: "il detto [Francesco] andato a star per garzò con ms iacomo mercante".

³³ ACPV, BdC, B 1616 – 1675, 7.

neighbours “the Muslim” [*la turca*].³⁴ In 1597, the officials of the Catecumeni accused Giovanni Battista, alias Mehemet, from Sarajevo, of allegedly enticing Christian boys to associate with Muslim merchants in Venice, and of trying to escape to Ragusa.³⁵

A few converts took advantage of their linguistic skills and position as cultural intermediaries. In 1616, Giovanni, the former Muslim Cruscadam, was employed by Ottavio dall'Olio, as instructor of the Turkish language for his son, and in 1622 Serafino, alias Mustafa went to work for an Armenian as an interpreter.³⁶ Other converts left Venice after unsuccessful attempts to establish themselves, such as Lorenzo, the former Mustafa from Sofia, who worked for his godfather, but unsatisfied with the salary left for Zara.³⁷ Some converts faced the menace of their Muslim families, such as Lucia, alias Assiela, from Sarajevo, who was kidnapped by some Muslim relatives of hers in 1642.³⁸

Striving to find a place in Venice, converts often sought association with persons from their homelands. This was the case particularly for converts from the Balkans. The convert Maria da Ponte, for instance, got married to another Balkan convert, Giorgio, alias Aly, from Coron.³⁹ The “Balkan-Levantine quarter” was an attractive and secure destination for converts.⁴⁰ In 1640, upon his arrival in Venice, Constantino Duca, a prospective convert of Orthodox origin from Athens, who had converted to Islam in Constantinople for more than ten years, immediately went to the S. Giorgio dei Greci area at the heart of the Balkan quarter.⁴¹

From the late 1580s, the Inquisition undertook the task of reconciling Christians who had converted to Islam, and by the early seventeenth century the Venetian Inquisition was the major channel for such reconciliation. The same development took place in

³⁴ ASV, SU, b. 67, proc. “Maria da Ponte”; see similar examples in Bologna: Sarti, “Bolognesi schiavi”, 459 – 61.

³⁵ ASV, SU, b. 45, proc. “Giovanni Battista di Bossina”, test. Aloisio Moro, 16 June 1579.

³⁶ ACPV, BdC, B 1616 – 1675, 1, 6.

³⁷ ACPV, BdC, B 1590 – 1594, u. d.

³⁸ ASV, Avogaria di Comun, Miscellanea Penale, b. 343, fascicolo 15 “Lucia Turca fatta Christiana”.

³⁹ ASV, SU, b. 67, proc. “Maria da Ponte”, test. Maria, 7 May 1591.

⁴⁰ See 137 – 40.

⁴¹ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. “Constantino Duca”.

other tribunals across Italy.⁴² Out of eighty sentences pronounced in 1582 in Rome, forty-nine concerned reconciliations of non-Catholics, and in 1603, the sentences involving reconciliation were seventy-eight among one hundred and seven sentences. Almost a half of these sentences concerned former Muslims.⁴³ These developments coincided with the peak of corsairing activity in the Barbary regencies between the late 1580s and the 1640s, with Italy having been from the 1560s one of the most thoroughly ravaged areas of the Mediterranean.

At about the same period, the Italian states began to deal with the problem of increasing Christian slaves by the development of organised ransoming agencies. Initiated in Naples in 1548, institutionalised ransom fundraising spread throughout Italy from the 1580s onwards, mainly through local confraternities, such as the Roman Santa Maria del Gonfalone, or State magistracies, such as the Venetian *Provveditori sopra Ospedali e Luoghi Pii* in 1586.⁴⁴ Therefore, it would be plausible to assume that the Inquisition's dealing with converts' reconciliation was the Catholic Church's response to win back some of those Christians who increasingly lapsed to Islam. Particularly for Venice, an additional reason made the authorities establish an institutionalised process of reconciliation with the Church; many prospective converts were Venetian subjects from the Dalmatian and Greek colonies bordering the Ottoman Empire.

Although there is little evidence for this development at an official level for the Venetian Inquisition, (we draw conclusions mainly on the basis of the hearings conducted), we get an indication of the development in other tribunals of the Venetian lands. In the seventeenth century, Rome advised the Inquisition of Adria on the way the proceedings involving converts should be conducted and the handling of

⁴² The first case of a convert to Islam dealt with by an Italian Inquisition was in 1562: Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*, 103; for a wide range of examples from tribunals around Italy: Bennassar, "Conversions, esclavage et commerce", 101 – 9; idem, "Frontières religieuses entre Islam et chrétienté", 72 – 78.

⁴³ Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 102: many of these reconciliations in Rome involved ex-Protestants. A similar trend can also be discerned in the proceedings of the Venetian Inquisition. However, compared to ex-Muslims the proceedings involving reconciliation of ex-Protestants are more difficult to evaluate from a quantitative point of view, due to the classification of *processi* in the Index of the Venetian Archive. Although the cases of former Muslims are mainly classified as "Mohammedanism", the *processi* involving former Protestants are dispersed under the rubrics of "Lutheranism", "Calvinism", "Apostasy", or even "Heresy in General".

⁴⁴ Davis, *Christian slaves, Muslim masters*, 75, 140, 150; R. C. Davis, "Slave Redemption in Venice, 1585 – 1797", in *Venice Reconsidered: the History and Civilization of an Italian city-state, 1297 – 1797*, ed. J. Martin and D. Romano (Baltimore and London, 2000), 455 – 57;

the cases.⁴⁵ The letter of instruction bears many similarities (in some points is exactly the same) with a handbook entitled *Prattica per proceder nelle cause del Santo Uffizio...come sponte comparenti* that was widely circulated among Inquisitions in manuscript.⁴⁶ It would be plausible to assume that similar instructions were also sent to the Venetian tribunal, or that letters of instructions were circulating between tribunals. This might explain the existence of the instruction in the archives of the Venetian Inquisition. Beyond converts to Islam, in the seventeenth century there was a wider interest in bringing people to Catholicism through the Inquisition. To this end, in 1623, Rome advised the Venetian *commissario* Francesco Guiotti, in charge of the office after the death of the Inquisitor Giovanni Lodovico Sechiario, on the conciliation of eastern rite communicants.⁴⁷ Referring specifically to some Greek women who had asked to become Catholics, though no such cases of that year have come down, the letter is indicative of the new problems that gradually came under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition.⁴⁸

In the seventeenth century the issue of spontaneously appearing converts was well under the Inquisition's jurisdiction, as references in procedural manuals suggest. In the seventeenth-century manuscript handbook *Prattica per proceder nelle cause del Santo Uffizio...come sponte comparenti*, apostates to Islam figured on the top of those offenders, included in the category "De sponte comparenti sospetti di heresia". The anonymous author, probably someone closely related to the Inquisition, was well aware of cases of converts, having handled in the Inquisition tribunals, as he described recurrent features of such hearings:

[...] they have performed acts of apostasy from the faith, such as serving in the army of heretics, going with Turks to plunder Christian populations and lands, having been circumcised by Turks, raising the right hand's forefinger and reciting the words Ailala, which refer to Mohammed himself, entering in mosques to pray, living according the

⁴⁵ ASV, SU, b. 153, in a bundle of documents entitled "Sommario d'alcune Lettere scritta [sic] della S. C. di Roma agli Inquisitori d'Adria per parte di Sua Beatitudine". Within a larger letter of instructions there is a section entitled "Delli sponte comparenti sospetti d'Eresia". The letter is undated but judging from the rest of the documents it can be dated in the early seventeenth century.

⁴⁶ See 120, 189 – 90.

⁴⁷ ASV, SU, b. 153, letter entitled "Al molto Reverendo ... officio di Venetia"; On Guiotti and the controversies over the appointment of a new Inquisitor: A. Zanelli, "Di alcune controversie tra la repubblica di Venezia ed il Sant'Officio nei primi anni del pontificato di Urbano VIII (1624-1626)", *Archivio Veneto*, ser. V, 6 (1929): 186 – 235.

⁴⁸ *Commissario* Guiotti was involved in the disappearance of Inquisition documents: Zanelli, "Di alcune controversie", 202 – 4.

Muslim rites, [...] consuming meat on fast days in order to show that they conform to the customs of Muslims⁴⁹

The discussion on the *sponte comparenti*, with particular reference to Christian converts to Islam, is a feature of seventeenth-century manuals. In his unpublished manual *Fundamentum processus conficiendi in causa Fidei*, completed in 1596, Vincenzo Castrucci, Inquisitor of Perugia in 1585 – 1598, made no reference to the *sponte comparenti*, let alone converts. Drawing heavily on N. Eymeric's *Directorium inquisitorum*, F. Pena's *scholia* and Simancas' *De catholicis institutionibus*, and, in all likelihood, on the author's experience as Inquisitor, the manual was intended for a handy digest of the above works and the inquisitorial procedure of the last quarter of the sixteenth century, in which the new offences that gradually had come under the authority of the Inquisition did not have their place yet.⁵⁰ N. Eymeric's medieval manual dealt with apostasy to Islam in conjunction with apostasy to Judaism and equated apostasy to heresy, whereas in its first printed version in the late sixteenth century with the commentaries of F. Pena, the editor maintained the line of Eymeric but commented that apostates are different from heretics, with apostasy a graver offence.⁵¹

A new line of approach that reflected the operation of contemporary tribunals first appeared in the widely read manual of Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*. The importance of Masini's approach lies in the introduction of the *sponte comparenti* as a special feature of inquisitorial procedure.⁵² Following Masini, other seventeenth

⁴⁹ A. Mirto, "Un inedito del Seicento sull'Inquisizione", *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*, 1 (1986): 109; The editor does not date the manual; however it was after 1617, given a reference to a decree by Paul V of that date. J. Tedeschi has convincingly attributed the handbook to Desiderio Scaglia from Brescia. Scaglia served as an Inquisitor successively in Pavia, Cremona and Milan. He became Commissario of the Roman Holy Office by Paul V and Cardinal in 1621. Tedeschi suggested that the handbook was written sometime in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. Scaglia died in 1639: Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 212, 230 – 31. Therefore, judging from details and references in the text itself, as suggested above, the handbook could surely be dated between 1617 and 1639, with the years close to 1617 more likely.

⁵⁰ Errera, *Processus in causa fidei*, 155 – 200; the manual is edited in 311 – 411.

⁵¹ Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*, 102 – 3; on Pena's annotated edition of Eymeric's manual: A. Borromeo, "A proposito del Directorium inquisitorum di Nicolás Eymeric e delle sue edizioni Cinquecentesche", *Critica storica*, 20, 4 (1983): 499 – 547; on the difference between apostasy and heresy, as delineating by Pena, with particular reference on Judaizers: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 59 – 60.

⁵² Masini, *Sacro arsenale*; the *sponte comparenti* are discussed together in the Terza Parte and Ottava Parte of the manual.

century manuals that came to print, such as T. Menghini's *Regole del tribunale del Sant'Offitio* in 1683, maintained a discussion on the *sponte comparenti*.⁵³

Returning to the situation in Venice, fragments of information suggest that before the Inquisition's involvement the reconciliation of converts took place before the Patriarch. In the mid-1580s, the Patriarch still absolved lapsed Christians, as the case of Maria da Ponte, alias Ainis from the island of Andros, accused of divination in 1591, suggests.⁵⁴ In 1591, Giovanni Battista Guarneri, a sailor from Genoa, in captivity by Barbary Muslims for two years, initially approached the Patriarch for reconciliation, who directed him to the Inquisition.⁵⁵ Reconciliation should have also taken place before local bishops, and even in the seventeenth century the practice remained alive although no longer applicable. Having found himself in Veglia after he abandoned his Muslim fellows, Giovanni de Cosimo, a soldier from Bosnia, decided to reconcile himself with the Church but there was no bishop in the town, as he said. Eventually, he approached the Inquisition in 1618.⁵⁶ In 1642, Giulio Cesare firstly sought conciliation from the Bishop of Sebenico, who simply absolved him, but informed Cesare that he did not have the authority of Rome to proceed to formal conciliation. The bishop provided Cesare with a letter of recommendation and urged him to go to Venice.⁵⁷

In general, the tribunal of the Inquisition, which in the cases of converts comprised the three clerical members and one or even two of the lay deputies, did not proceed to interrogate the converts after their initial deposition. This might reflect the way that the final and official confrontation between the tribunal and the offender took place. In an "unofficial" preliminary session the Inquisitor had already examined the offender and it was only the final deposition that was written down. This is substantiated by examples that show that no preliminary examination took place. The taking of the oath at the beginning of the session indicated an earlier examination. Extensive examination, for instance, followed Domenico de Thomeis' deposition in 1612. Contrary to other similar cases, De Thomeis did not take the usual oath before

⁵³ Errera, *Processus in causa fidei*, 288 – 89: The seventh part of the manual is entitled "Settima denunzia delli sponte comparenti contro di se medesimi".

⁵⁴ ASV, SU, b. 67, proc. "Maria da Ponte", test. Maria, 7 May 1591.

⁵⁵ ASV, SU, b. 67, proc. "Battista Guarnerus".

⁵⁶ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. "Giovanni de Cosimo".

⁵⁷ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Giulio Cesare"; on the Inquisition and episcopal tribunals, A. Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin, 1996), 316 – 29, 336 – 42.

beginning his deposition, but only after he completed it.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the taking of the oath also indicated that the tribunal had established the identity of the offender and was ready to proceed to the official deposition and examination. On occasions that the religious identity of the offender remained dubious the oath was taken at a later stage when the Inquisition had established what the offender was seeking and his/her intentions. In 1616, Abdone, a Christian from Aleppo, took the oath after the deposition and interrogation, whereas his interpreter, the Syrian Benedetto took the oath at the beginning of the hearing.⁵⁹

Though lapsed Christians who originated from Venice or other Italian areas were more likely to undergo some more careful examination, it was mainly the length of conversion, the age at which it took place, the motive, and the circumstances and how much the convert associated with Islam that usually determined whether interrogation would follow the offender's deposition. Thus, the Inquisition's approach crossed geographical boundaries. In 1616, Abdone, a broker from Aleppo, who had converted at the age of ten and lived as a Muslim for twenty years, was subjected to several questions before being reconciled with the Church.⁶⁰ In 1598, Fra Daniele da Venezia, who admitted that he had embraced Islam in Cyprus at his initiative, was asked to give further explanations about his motives and the events that had taken place.⁶¹ The length of conversion was a major reason that underlined extensive interrogation. Conversion at a young age, if it lasted long, received more attention. Giovanni Tussepich from Makarska, Dalmatia, who converted at the age of twelve but only for six months, was immediately absolved, whereas Tomaso from Carlovaz, having converted at the age of six but lived as Muslim for fifteen years was carefully examined after his deposition.⁶²

The offender's narrative and the details he/she provided determined to a large extent the subsequent development of the hearing and the Inquisitor's intervention. After the initial deposition the Inquisitor went on seeking further clarification and, in some cases, he began interrogating in order to reconstruct the events that led to someone's conversion. In the case of Abdone in 1616, despite the initial deposition,

⁵⁸ ACPV, CSI, b. 4 (1586 – 1622), 330v.

⁵⁹ ASV, SU, b. 71, proc. "Abdone"; on oath see, 105.

⁶⁰ ASV, SU, b. 71, proc. "Abdone".

⁶¹ ACPV, CSI, b. 3 (1586 – 1599), 379 – 384v; also, see: ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. "Francesco Argentino".

the Inquisitor bypassed the deposition seeking to reconstruct the events: "he was asked to say on what occasion he had abandoned the Catholic faith and became a Muslim". As Abdone related the events of conversion that took place in an area called Seida (Saida, Sidon), the Inquisitor asked for what reason he associated with Muslims and not with Christians in Seida.⁶³ Similarly despite Fra Daniele's deposition, the Inquisitor required additional clarification on the events of conversion: "On what occasion did you become Muslim; who did you address, and what reply did you get; and did you ask more than once to become Muslim?"⁶⁴

The Inquisitor took particular interest in examining the extent of the offender's adherence to Islam or detachment from Christianity. A standard question was about the period that the offender had been a Muslim. The rites of passage to Islam often drew the Inquisitor's attention, although on other occasions the offenders' standard reference "and I was made to renounce the holy Christian faith" seems to have satisfied the interrogator. In 1612, the Inquisitor asked Domenico de Thomeis to indicate: "what rites were used in making him a Muslim, and what ceremonies he did".⁶⁵ Usually the questions on the rites of conversion followed those on the events of conversion. The Inquisitor took a similar interest in cases of Christians of Jewish origin who, when Jews, had converted to Islam. Drawing on a widely held view that a Jew who converted to Islam was first required to become a Christian, the Inquisitor did not hesitate to present this view as a firm prerequisite in Muslim rites. In 1632 the Inquisitor asked the former Jew Giovanni Battista Bonaventura, who as a Jew had lapsed to Islam if "he first became a Christian before he turned Muslim. [...] Because no Jew is allowed to become Muslim unless earlier he becomes Christian".⁶⁶ Among the rites of conversion, the Inquisitor showed particular interest in circumcision. He was interested not only in whether

⁶² ASV, SU, b. 91, proc. "Giovanni Tussepich"; b. 97, "Tomaso figlio di Georgio".

⁶³ ASV, SU, b. 71, proc. Abdone: "Interrogatus che dica con che occasione abbandonasse la fede cattolica et si facesse turco"; "Interrogatus per qual causa andò così a seida fra turchi, et non andò fra christiani".

⁶⁴ ACPV, CSI, b. 3 (1586 – 1599), 380v: "Ei dictum con che occasion vi facesti Turco et da chi facesti capo, che risposta havesti, et se piu d'una volta facesti instantia di farvi Turco".

⁶⁵ ACPV, CSI, b. 4 (1586 – 1622), 330v: "Interrogatus che ceremonie gli furono fatte nel farsi turcho et che ceremonie fatte".

⁶⁶ Processi (1608 – 1632), 170: "Interrogatus se allhora si facesse christiano prima che farsi turco [...] Et sibi dicto che appare falso, perché nissuno hebreo si può far turco se prima non si fa christiano"; on how widespread this view was in Venice: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 303 – 4; Interestingly, the same view was held in northern Africa: Deringil, "There is No Compulsion in Religion", 549.

circumcision took place, but also how the convert perceived circumcision. Interrogating Francesco Argentino, the Inquisitor not only indicated the non-Christian nature of the custom but also underlined its association with Islam and Judaism: and asked him “if he believed that it was permissible for a Christian to get circumcised in the Jewish and Muslim manner”.⁶⁷

The Inquisitor was preoccupied with both the offender’s adherence to Islam and detachment from Christianity. Fra Daniele was asked about his participation in practising Islam: “While being a Muslim did you go to mosques, practice their rites, and recite the prayers they are used to do, and conform completely to their rite?”⁶⁸ The offender’s Christian adherence was examined by asking about his/her knowledge of Christian prayers: asking “if he knew the paternoster, the Ave Maria, the Credo and the other Christian prayers”.⁶⁹ In cases of obscure converts due to the length of their conversion or their distant place of origin, the Inquisitor went on by asking the recital of Christian prayers. Adbone, who declared he knew the paternoster and the Ave Maria in the Syrian language, was ordered to recite in the presence of two interpreters.⁷⁰

It should be noted, however, that apart from the reconciliation, the Inquisitor was interested in the instruction of the convert before the final abjuration and formal re-admission. In 1591, it was stipulated that the thirty-year-old convert Luigi Hernandes from Spain, who had been captured at the age of nine, should be catechized under the supervision of the parish priest of S. Biagio before his reconciliation at the subsequent session of the Inquisition.⁷¹

Beyond the ritualistic adherence to Islam, the Inquisitor recognized and was concerned with any intellectual and spiritual commitment. In this context, the Inquisitor asked Domenico de Thomeis: “When he became a Muslim did he do it wholeheartedly by renouncing the faith of Jesus Christ and esteeming the Muslim

⁶⁷ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. “Francesco Argentino”: Interrogatus an credat licitum esse viro cristiano circumcidi more Hebreorum et turcarum”.

⁶⁸ ACPV, CSI, b. 3 (1586 – 1599), 381v: “Ei dictum nel tempo che fosti Turco andasti voi alle moschee, servasti li loro riti, et facesti l’oration, che loro sogliono fare et vivendo in tutto secondo il loro rito”.

⁶⁹ ACPV, CSI, b. 4 (1586 – 1622), 330v: “Interrogatus se sa il Pr l’Ave Maria, il credo, et le altre orazioni cristiane”.

⁷⁰ ASV, SU, b., 71, proc. “Adbone”: “Interrogatus se sa le orazioni christiane, il Pater nostro, et l’Ave Maria”; “Et de facto ad mandatum fori (?) recitavit in dicto Idiomate orationes dominicam et Angelicam”.

⁷¹ ASV, SU, b. 68, proc. “Luigi Hernandes”.

Law as better”.⁷² In the same vein, Domenico de Giorgio was asked if “while being a Muslim had he ever believed that sect was good, or better than the Christian faith, and that the Muslims can find salvation”.⁷³

The Inquisitor was often interested in the way converts perceived their position in Islam and that of the other Christians, and how much they had come under the influence of their fellow Muslims over Christian tenets. Inquisitors examined converts on discussions that might have taken place with other Muslims: “While being and dressed as a Muslim did you ever commit anything in deeds and in words against Christians and their faith?”; “While being among Muslims have you ever discussed anything about our faith and theirs, believing that their faith, or some aspects, was better than ours?”⁷⁴ Spiritual adherence and detachment was examined from both ways. Inquisitors were often interested in both religions and did not hesitate to pose questions on the acceptance of tenets that they regarded as Muslim. In 1640, Francesco Argentino was interrogated about what the Inquisitor considered as Muslim spirituality and about his awareness of Christian teachings:

He was asked if in any way he believed that Mohammed was the true and major prophet and close to God, and someone could find salvation in that sect... [and] if he believes and even did believe that Jesus Christ our Saviour was not the true God, but however a prophet, as they themselves falsely assert.⁷⁵

The establishment of the offender’s intention behind conversion underlined the Inquisitor’s interrogation.⁷⁶ Letters of instruction and manuals stressed that the search for the offender’s intention was the main task of the Inquisitor when dealing with converts: “After having diligently interrogated those [the *sponte comparenti*]

⁷² ACPV, CSI, b. 4 (1586 – 1622), 330v: “Interrogatus se quando si fece turcho si fece realmente, rinegando la fede di Giesù Cristo, stimando la legge Maometana migliore”.

⁷³ ASV, SU, b. 77, proc. “Domenico de Giorgio”: “Interrogatus che dica se mentre ha continuato di esser turco, habbia mai creduto che quella setta sia buona, et migliore della fede de cristiani, et creduto che li turchi si possino salvare”.

⁷⁴ ACPV, CSI, b. 3 (1586 – 1599), 381v – 382: “Ei dictum nel tempo che fosti Turco, et in habito Turchesco trattasti mai cosa che in fatti et in parole contra cristiani et la loro santa fede”; “Ei dictum havete voi in alcun tempo, che sete stato tra Turchi ragionato mai della fede loro et della nostra credendo che la loro in qualche parte o in tutto fosse piu vera della nostra”.

⁷⁵ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. “Francesco Argentino”: “Interrogatus an modo credat maomettam esse verum et maiorem prophetam et deo proximam et in illa secta quemque posse salvarì”; “Interrogatus an credat vel etiam crediderit Cristum Iesum salvatorem nostrum non esse verum deum, sed tamen prophetam ut ipsi falsò ascerunt”; see below 203.

⁷⁶ On the importance of intention and motive in cases of judaizing: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 60 – 4.

about their intention and any accomplice, you proceed to the abjuration”.⁷⁷ More illustrative was the relevant section in Desiderio Scaglia’s *Prattica per proceder*:

As far as the *sponte comparenti* are concerned, attention should be paid to what they testify, both to the facts and their intention [...] and having found their answers about their intentions satisfying, the Holy Office bypasses torture but not the abjuration, because abjuration is not an act of punishment but a declaration of not having had a less than Catholic intention and of wishing to live and die Catholic has its place also with them.⁷⁸

Depending on the offender’s deposition and how convincing his/her story appeared, the Inquisitors followed different paths of questioning over intentions. In obscure cases, especially when the offender had voluntarily embraced Islam, the Inquisitor did not hesitate to adopt a straightforward approach. In 1616, Abdone was asked: “for what reason he became a Muslim”.⁷⁹ In 1617, the Inquisitor bluntly asked Giorgio Iuririch “what motivated him to become a Muslim and then to campaign against Christians”.⁸⁰

Another path of interrogation about motives and intention was based on oblique questions. It combined examination with a pedagogical tone that tended to remind the offender of his/her responsibility. The set of questions posed to Domenico de Giorgio followed this method: “he was asked if he knows that a good Christian should show Christian conduct even outwardly as well as defend his faith”; and in the next question: “if he is discontented with renouncing the Christian faith and not having confessed and preserved it firmly”.⁸¹ Most hearings ended in a question imbued with scrutiny and pedagogy: a Giulio Cesare was asked “if he had believed or did believe that it was permissible for a Catholic Christian to become a Muslim or to

⁷⁷ ASV, SU, b. 153, in a bundle of documents entitled “Sommario d'alcune Lettere scritta [sic] della S. C. di Roma agli Inquisitori d'Adria per parte di Sua Beatitudine”.

⁷⁸ Mirto, “Un inedito del Seicento”, 109.

⁷⁹ ASV, SU, b. 71, proc. “Abdone”: “Interrogatus che dica che causa lo movesse a farse turco”.

⁸⁰ ASV, SU, b. 77, proc. “Giorgio Iuririch”: “Et sibi dicto che cosa dunque lo movesse a farsi turco, et poi anco a militar contra cristiani”.

⁸¹ ASV, SU, b. 77, proc. “Domenico de Georgio”: “Interrogatus sa che un buon cristiano deve anco esteriormente mostrar di esser cristiano, et defender la sua fede [...] Interrogatus se sia mal contento di haver negato la fede cristiana, et di non esser stato costante a confessarla et mantenerla”.

renounce in any other way our holy faith for saving his life or any other worldly cause”.⁸²

Examining the intention and religious adherence of converts, the Inquisition confronted the problem of dissimulation, as it was expressed in the distinction converts made between outward and inner religious affiliation. Desiderio Scaglia’s handbook clearly made reference to the way converts presented their identity and advised that the Inquisitor should pay attention to the inward religious adherence, what converts referred to as the true religiosity they maintained in their hearts despite the verbal renunciation and other non-Christian external acts. According to Scaglia converts denied that they had committed their errors on purpose that is, they did not adhere with their heart [*ma negano l’intentione, d’haver adherito col cuore a’suddetti errori*].⁸³

How this distinction came into being is difficult to gauge, that is, whether the Inquisition initiated it in early dealings with converts and gradually it was appropriated by the offenders, or from the beginning some converts resorted to this strategy and the Inquisition followed and regarded it as a fair justification. As early as 1591, the Genoese sailor Giovanni Battista Guarneri resorted to the scheme of inward adherence: “my renunciation was not with the heart but only with the mouth [...] even when they [the Muslims] circumcised me and gave me the name Maumetto, in my heart I asked the Virgin for help”.⁸⁴

It is interesting to note how the Inquisitor handled the converts’ alleged verbal and superficial renunciation of Christianity in comparison with other offences. Although, as a rule the Inquisitor relied on the assumption that “every person believes in his soul the things he expresses in words”,⁸⁵ which determined the verdict on someone’s guilt, eventually it was not applied in cases of prospective converts. The Inquisition made a selective application of the above provision. The way Inquisitors questioned converts indicated the way they applied the provision: putting

⁸² ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Giulio Cesare”: “Interrogatus se ha creduto, o crede esser lecito ad un cristiano cattolico farsi turco, o rinegare in altro modo la nostra santa fede per salvarsi la vita, o altri rispetti humani”.

⁸³ Mirto, “Un inedito del Seicento”, 109.

⁸⁴ ASV, SU, b. 67, proc. “Battista Guarnerus”: “la mia rinegatione non fa fatta col core, ma solamente con la bocca [...] anzi quando mi tagliavano loro mi dicevano ch’ io chiamasse Maumetto, et io col core chiamava la beata Vergine, che mi aiutasse”.

⁸⁵ The phrase comes from the trial of Giovanni Battista Capponi, a Christian who expressed favourable views about Judaism: translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 62.

a question “whether he knew that it is not permissible to renounce the proper Christian faith with words or other open acts”.⁸⁶

Following the advice of procedural manuals, the Inquisitors resorted to the double identity scheme in cases of obscure individuals, thus recognizing the value of a crypto-Christian identity.⁸⁷ In 1598, the Inquisitor did not fail to examine Fra Daniele’s religious identity with reference to his inward adherence: asking “How long you have been spiritually Muslim, before returning to the Catholic faith with your heart”.⁸⁸ In the same manner, the Inquisitor relied on the inward adherence even in cases of converts to Judaism. In 1623, Fernao de Martin de Almeida Pereira from Lisbon, a Catholic without any indication of Jewish origin, according to his testimony, who had converted to Judaism in Hamburg, was asked “if he really renounced the Catholic faith and embraced Judaism in his heart, or did it just in words, despite the observance of Jewish rites”.⁸⁹

Although the overwhelming majority of converts’ hearings was exclusively handled by the Venetian Inquisition, in more complicated cases the tribunal consulted the Cardinals in Rome. The Inquisition followed the advice received from Rome in the case of Fra Daniele da Venezia in 1598. Passing the sentence on Fra Daniele, the Inquisition made a reference to the instructions from the Cardinal of Santa Severina [*et inherendo letteris Illustrissimi Card. S. Severine disponent circa suum casum*].⁹⁰ The way the case unfolded suggests that the Venetian Inquisition followed the instructions from Rome. In February 1598, Fra Daniele handed a letter over to the Inquisitor revealing his voluntary conversion in Ottoman Cyprus and asking forgiveness. The Inquisitor immediately sought advice from Rome, by sending a copy of Fra Daniele’s letter. In a letter dated 7 March, the Cardinal of S. Severina wrote to the Inquisitor to call Fra Daniele for interrogation and also laid down the sentence

⁸⁶ ACPV, CSI, b. 4 (1586 – 1622), 330v: “Interrogatus se sa che non è lecito con parole ne con atti exteriori negare propria fede cristiana”.

⁸⁷ See the Inquisitor’s approach to crypto-Jews and crypto-Muslims, 74, 90 – 101, 106 – 7, 165 – 68.

⁸⁸ ACPV, CSI, b 3 (1586 – 1599), 381v: “Ei dictum quanto tempo sete stato con l’animo ancora Turco prima che ritornasti col core alla santa fede cattolica”.

⁸⁹ Processi (1608 – 1632), 79: “Interrogatus se veramente con il core et intentione ha rinegata la fede catholica et abbracciato l’Hebraismo opure solamente l’ha fatto con le parole, come di sopra, essercitando i riti hebrei et cetera”; on the case see also below 195.

⁹⁰ Cardinal Santa Severina and Head of the Congregation of the Holy Office was Giulio Antonio Santori. He was one of the very powerful and forceful Inquisition and Index Cardinals, involved with the case of Giordano Bruno, with T. Campanella, and the 1596 Index. He had strong views that the Talmud should be banned, and not allowed even in an expurgated version.

that should be inflicted on the offender. The first appearance of Fra Daniele before the Inquisition took place on 31 March. Following the instructions from Rome, Fra Daniele was required to make an abjuration *de formali* and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in a Franciscan monastery in Verona deprived of the honours of his Order and “perpetuo privatum voce audiva et passiva”.⁹¹ The case of Fra Daniele suggests that although intervention from Rome in cases where Jews were involved disappeared after the late 1580s, in other trials advice was sought and instructions were given.⁹²

The inquisitorial proceedings involving prospective converts concluded with the offender's readmission to the Church accompanied by a formal abjuration and spiritual penalties. In most cases converts were required to make an abjuration *de levi*.⁹³ The reasons for which the offender had lapsed to Islam determined the abjuration he/she had to perform. In 1640, Francesco Argentino, who confessed to having lapsed to Islam without any violence, had to perform an abjuration *de formali*.⁹⁴ In the same vein, Abdone, who had converted at the age of ten, performed an abjuration *de formali*. However, although in theory an abjuration *de formali* or *de vehementi* had to be performed publicly,⁹⁵ the Venetian Inquisition did not follow this regulation in cases of converts.⁹⁶ There is no evidence to suggest that converts made public abjurations. On the contrary, Abdone performed his abjuration *de formali* genuflected before the Inquisition, with the assistance of his interpreter.⁹⁷ Before the Inquisition also took place the abjuration *de vehementi* of the Neapolitan Giulio Cesare in 1642. Cesare lived as a Muslim for about twenty-three years and had also a Muslim wife and children, a reason for which the Inquisition might have requested the abjuration *de vehementi*.⁹⁸

⁹¹ ACPV, CSI, b. 3 (1586 – 1599), 379, 383v – 4v.

⁹² Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 47 – 8.

⁹³ On the different types of abjuration: Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of heresy*, 152; as early as 1562, the tribunals were ordered to receive the *sponte comparenti* mildly, Davidson, “Rome and the Venetian Inquisition”, 19.

⁹⁴ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. “Francesco Argentino”.

⁹⁵ Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of heresy*, 152.

⁹⁶ In Venice public abjurations were performed in a not much-frequented place: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 66.

⁹⁷ ASV, SU, b. 71, proc. “Abdone”.

⁹⁸ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Giulio Cesare”.

The different degrees of abjuration reflected only the different degrees of suspicion of heresy that is, the way the Inquisition classified offences.⁹⁹ The difference between the three degrees of suspicion of heresy materialized only in the spiritual penances inflicted on the offenders. Francesco Argentino, who made an abjuration *de formali*, was required to fast on Friday on bread and wine for three years, recite the Rosary once a week and confess and receive communion four times annually for the same period.¹⁰⁰ The same sentence was passed on Giulio Cesare after his abjuration *de vehementi*.¹⁰¹ For Elena Carandi, who was found mildly suspect of heresy, it was stipulated that for three years she should recite the Rosary genuflected before an icon, and confess and receive communion two or three times annually.¹⁰²

Over the years the Inquisition formalized the process of conciliating converts with the Church and gave more emphasis on the salutary penances that offenders had to perform. In 1592, Demetrio Bagga, one of the first to appear before the Inquisition for conciliation, was required for a year to recite the Rosary every Sunday, and confess and receive communion twice. Moreover it was stipulated that he should appear before the Inquisitor once a month.¹⁰³ This was the only time that such provision appeared in proceedings of converts. The early date of the hearing might explain the provision. The proceedings involving prospective converts had not yet reached the formalization of the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁴ This is also substantiated by the tribunal absolving Demetrio Bagga without specifying the offence and the degree of suspicion of heresy, which became a permanent feature in seventeenth-century proceedings. Finally, the formula of Bagga's abjuration was not as detailed as it became later. As a rule, seventeenth-century abjurations had a standard verbal formulation and included information on the converts' life, as had been narrated by

⁹⁹ The violent suspicion of heresy in contrast to formal heresy was maintained in seventeenth-century proceedings in Venice, whereas Rome did not follow the distinction any more: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 63.

¹⁰⁰ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. "Francesco Argentino".

¹⁰¹ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Giulio Cesare".

¹⁰² ASV, SU, b. 77, proc. "Elena Carandi".

¹⁰³ ASV, SU, b. 69, proc. "Demetrio Bagga", 24 October 1592.

¹⁰⁴ Over the sixteenth century the sentences against Judaizers also underwent a similar process of formalization by emphasizing the abjuration and conciliation: Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 65.

themselves; for instance, if circumcision took place, the length of living as Muslim.¹⁰⁵

Almost ten years before Bagga's confession, the spontaneous confession of Giovanni Battista, alias Abraham, a convert of Jewish origin, who after his baptism in Rome lapsed to Judaism and briefly to Islam, was received with just a severe warning that "should he fall again into so grave a sin he would no longer be pardoned but be put to death as a relapsed heretic", and advice to return to the Catecumeni.¹⁰⁶ The Inquisition found his error grave but recognized his repentance and spontaneous confession. As in the case of Bagga, it was stipulated that wherever he found himself Giovanni Battista should appear before the local ecclesiastical authorities or the Inquisition every month for a year.¹⁰⁷

However, over the course of time together with formalization, the conciliation of converts became a fixed and routine procedure. Towards the mid-seventeenth century, within the general decline of Inquisitorial activity (from 1630 the numbers of defendants halved),¹⁰⁸ even in cases of converts that were found vehemently suspect of heresy the Inquisitor did not continue questioning the offender, as earlier, but just passed the spiritual penances which remained the same.¹⁰⁹

Overall, the Inquisition followed a mild policy towards converts and renegades; this is substantiated by the summary proceedings and the lack of any corporal punishment. The spontaneous confession of converts was highly esteemed by the Inquisition, and mild treatment was intended not only for former Muslims but also for those few who lapsed to Judaism, such as Ferdinando Almeida Pereira in 1623.¹¹⁰ Confession and contrition generated mercy.¹¹¹ The inquisitorial proceedings involving reconciliation remind us that from the late sixteenth century the Inquisition in Counter-Reformation Italy was concerned with conversion as well as coercion.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ For instance, see the abjurations of Giovanni de Cosimo from Bosnia (1618) and the Venetian Domenico de Giorgio (1621), both found "mildly suspect of heresy": ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. "Giovanni de Cosimo", b. 77, proc. "Domenico de Giorgio".

¹⁰⁶ Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 60.

¹⁰⁷ Processi (1582 – 1585), 50 – 1, 56.

¹⁰⁸ Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 92.

¹⁰⁹ See, for instance, the case of Nicolò Givancia from Cattaro in 1642: ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Nicolò Givancia".

¹¹⁰ Processi (1608 – 1632), 80 – 3.

¹¹¹ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 56.

¹¹² Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy*, 102, 134.

Stories of Conversion and Aspects of Identity

In front of the Inquisition lapsed Christians explained their conversion to Islam on various grounds. Some conversions were the result of force. Converts from Balkan areas were often the victims of Ottoman raids. Other converts were caught on board by Muslim pirates or even Christian pirates, and then sold to Muslim officials and slave owners, especially on the Barbary Coast. In 1643, Giorgio Mircovich from Dugopoli (Dugopolje) told the Inquisition that at the age of thirty-three he had injured a Muslim in a row and as a result he had been forced to convert. Urged on by his parents, Mircovich converted to save his life.¹¹³ Marino Zed from Banja Luka was forced to convert for insulting a Muslim.¹¹⁴ In 1642, Nicolò Givancia, alias Omer, from a village near Cattaro (Kotor) told the Inquisition that he had been taken by some Muslims in exchange for tax that his family could not pay.¹¹⁵

On the other hand, other converts did not hesitate to confess that they had converted at their initiative. In 1617, Giorgio Iuririch, alias Cussain, from the Bosnian village of Dolaz (Dolac) admitted that at a young age, unbeknown to his family, he had been enticed by some Muslims with the promise of gifts, money and fame.¹¹⁶ Pietro Aderni from Sebenico (Šibenik) at the age of twenty was persuaded by a Muslim neighbour that “the Christian Law was not as good as that of the Muslims”.¹¹⁷ A more spectacular confession came in 1598 from Daniele, a Franciscan from Venice. He converted voluntarily to Islam in Ottoman Cyprus on his way to the Holy Land on a pilgrimage. Having been impressed with the splendour of some cavalry regiments and their way of life, Daniele approached the Ottoman officials and asked to become Muslim. Some voluntary converts lived in a continuous move between Christianity and Islam. Francesco Argentino, a sailor from Calabria, was first converted in northern Africa. Later, in Italy, he returned to Christianity. However, traveling across the Syrian coast, he voluntarily approached

¹¹³ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Giorgio Mircovich”.

¹¹⁴ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Marino Zed”.

¹¹⁵ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Nicolò Givancia”.

¹¹⁶ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. “Giorgio Iuririch”.

¹¹⁷ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Marino Zed”: this *processo* includes the deposition of Pietro Aderni; for additional motives behind conversion, G. Veinstein, “Sur les conversions à l’islam dans les Balkans ottomans avant le XIX^e siècle”, *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 2 (1996): 153 – 167.

the Ottoman authorities asking to become a Muslim. Some years later, after troubles with his fellow Muslims Argentino resolved to re-embrace Christianity. Repenting his fault, he appeared before the Inquisitor of Venice seeking forgiveness and conciliation with the Church.

Finally, a lot of converts gave another dimension of conversion to Islam by justifying conversion on the basis of a calculated decision. Andrea Rossi from Valcamonica, a porter in Venice, was captured while being a soldier in Dalmatia. Having been a slave for three years he resolved to convert in fear of being sent to the galleys.¹¹⁸ While fishing near Corfu, Zaccaria Chiozzi from Venice and his companions found themselves on the coast of Vallona (Vlorë), where they were captured by some Turks. Owing to his Muslim masters' reluctance to allow him to write to Venice to arrange the ransom, Chiozzi confessed that he had resolved to convert to have chances to escape.¹¹⁹ In 1612, Domenico de Thomeis from Brescia was captured by some Muslims in Cattaro, Dalmatia. As his Muslim master was about to sell him as a galley slave, Domenico resolved to embrace Islam. Some years later, seeking forgiveness for his fault, Domenico told the Inquisition that he had converted because he knew that "the Muslim Law prescribes that upon someone becoming Muslim, he is restored to liberty". In 1591, Giovanni Battista Guarneri, a sailor from Genoa, who lived as a Muslim on the Barbary Coast, clearly justified a calculated conversion to Islam. He told the Inquisition:

Though I renounced the Christian faith, my purpose was not to remain Muslim. I just did it in order to have more liberty and chances to escape because the Christians are kept under strict surveillance and have little chance to escape. But the Muslims and the renegades are free to go wherever they want to.¹²⁰

Converts who admitted a calculated conversion to Islam asserted that while having been Muslims they fashioned a double identity. Outwardly they conformed to the Muslim customs but inwardly they maintained their Christian faith and the wish to return sometime to Christianity.

On the other hand, studying many Muslim slaves who eagerly approached the Venetian Catecumeni to turn Christians, suggests that the same practice might have

¹¹⁸ ASV, SU, b. 87, proc. "Andrea Rossi".

¹¹⁹ ASV, SU, b. 71, proc. "Zaccaria Giozzi quondam Paolo".

also been widespread among Muslims captives, such as the fifty-eight-year-old Muslim Ali from Gallipoli, a captive in the Venetian galleys in 1594; or Ali from Alexandria who, imprisoned declared his wish to become Christian. Others did so despite the opposition of their Venetian masters, such as a young Muslim who escaped from his master and appeared in the Catecumeni in 1590.¹²¹

The life of converts to Islam, their contacts with Muslim religion and their place in Muslim societies remained in most aspects obscure. To begin with the rites of passage to Islam remained vague, as the converts often bypassed the events of conversion with a stereotypical reference: "and I was made to renounce the holy Christian faith"¹²². However, we get fragments of information from several cases. Domenico Lucido from Orvieto was captured together with his companions from Naples and Bologna on their way to Hungary for timber. For three years he lived in Belgrade and Sarajevo. He underwent a gradual conversion rite. In Belgrade an initial ceremony took place by raising his hand and reciting the form of abnegation. A year later, in Sarajevo, he got circumcised.¹²³ Many converts highlighted circumcision as the basic feature of the rite of passage. However, circumcision was not always observed; for instance, Biasio Matagusio from Alessio, who converted at the age of fifty, underwent circumcision,¹²⁴ whereas Giovanni Tussepich, alias Usmano, from Makarska, despite his captivity at the age of ten, was not circumcised.¹²⁵ Especially for converts originating from Italy circumcision seems to have been the most controversial rite. Mario Speri said that he was forced to abnegate by reciting the words "Alà Alà mehemet è sulà that is, Mohammed stands above all"; but it was the circumcision that he resisted more. He said that four Muslims held and threatened him with death for not allowing them to complete the rite.¹²⁶ Similarly, Domenico Lucido consented to the verbal renunciation of Christianity but he got circumcised by force.¹²⁷ Zaccaria Chiozzi said that circumcision was the rite that among all others he had most resisted.¹²⁸

¹²⁰ ASV, SU, b. 67, proc. "Battista Guarnerus".

¹²¹ ACPV, BdC, B 1590 – 1594, u. d.

¹²² See for instance: ASV, SU, b. 86, proc. "Paolo da Scutari".

¹²³ ASV, SU, b. 90, proc. "Domenico Lucido".

¹²⁴ ASV, SU, b. 86, proc. "Biasio Matagusio".

¹²⁵ ASV, SU, b. 91, proc. "Giovanni Tussepich".

¹²⁶ ASV, SU, b. 90, proc. "Marius Speri".

¹²⁷ ASV, SU, b. 90, proc. "Domenico Lucido".

¹²⁸ ASV, SU, b. 71, proc. "Zaccaria Giozzi quondam Paolo".

A more detailed description of the conversion rite came from Marino Zed. Before an official of Banja Luka he got circumcised and recited the words: "There is but one God and Mohammed is his true representative" [*non vi è dio se non un solo, et Macometto è vero Nuntio di dio*].¹²⁹ Demetrio Bagga gave a slightly different version of the words of abnegation: "Mohammed is our beloved prophet. One God and one true prophet Mohammed".¹³⁰ Additional features included the conversion process Giovanni de Rumolo from Salonica underwent in Constantinople; he got circumcised and was forced to trample on the cross.¹³¹ Similarly, Giorgio Mircovich said that he had been taken to a mosque in Clissa (Klis), where he trampled on the cross, was circumcised and made to raise the right-hand forefinger, thrice reciting certain words that he did not understand.¹³²

The Calabrese sailor Francesco Argentino gave a vivid description of a spectacular conversion ceremony, which corresponded with the rites observed in voluntary conversions throughout the Mediterranean:

...I presented myself to Mustafà, Agà, that is, the Governor, of the town of S. Giovanni d'Agri, and I told him that I wanted to become Muslim. He asked me: 'do you want to become Muslim?' And I said: 'Yes, sir'. He kept me at his home that night and in the morning his people took me to the Cadì, that is, the Judge, whose name I do not know. He asked me whether I wanted to become a Muslim and I said I did. Then the Cadì recited some Turkish words, which in our language mean that Mohammed is the major prophet and close to god. Then they dressed me as a Muslim and got me on a horse. A man with a banner went ahead and others played the drums and the trumpets while people shouted: 'long live the Muslim faith, a Christian abandons his law and faith because our law is better than the law of Christians'. In this way they took me around the town and the Muslims bowed to show their joy and I returned their greetings in the same manner.¹³³

¹²⁹ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Marino Zed".

¹³⁰ ASV, SU, b. 69, proc. "Demitrio Bagga".

¹³¹ ASV, SU, b. 88, proc. "Giovanni Rumolo".

¹³² ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Giorgio Mircovich"; rites of dishonouring religious symbols were particularly observed in northern Africa: Deringil, "The Is No Compulsion in Religion", 549; on various conversion rites throughout the Mediterranean, and their perception by the converts: Bennassar, "Conversion ou reniement?", 1349 – 66.

¹³³ ASV, S.U., b. 97, proc. "Francesco Argentino": "andato dentro la città di s. Giovanni d'Agri, dall'Agà cioè Governatore di quella città, chiamato Mustafà, et li dissi che mi volevo far turco. Egli mi rispose: ti vuoi far turco? Et io dissi: signor sì. Mi tene nella sua casa la sera, et la matina mi condussero le genti di questo Agà dal Cadì cioè Giudice, del quale non so il nome. Et questo mi interrogò se volevo esser turco. Risposi di sì. Et all'ora detto Cadì disse alcune parole turchesche, che nella nostra lingua vogliono significare, che Maometto è maggior Profetta et vicino a dio, et altre

Central in the way converts presented their religious identity was the observance of Muslim or non-Christian dietary customs. Francesco dal Moro from Venice lived in Tunis for seventeen years. For seven years, he continued to live as a “good Christian and Catholic”. After conversion he did not practise any Muslim customs and rites. The only non-Christian customs that Dal Moro admitted having observed were the consumption of meat and the participation in attacks against Christians.¹³⁴ Giovanni de Cosimo, a soldier from Bosnia, described his dietary customs in relation to his Muslim identity: “Often on Friday I pretended illness in order not to eat meat with them [Muslims].”¹³⁵ Focusing on dietary customs, the Venetian Domenico de Giorgio said: “As far as my way of living was concerned, I ate meat on Friday and Saturday, as all the other Muslims did”. Later he gave another dimension of the importance of culinary customs, this time to show his unshakable Christian adherence while being a Muslim: “together with some other Christians, I ate some pork meat in secret”.¹³⁶

Many of those Christians who followed Islam asserted that while being Muslims they sought to have the least possible association with their new religion. The above-mentioned Francesco dal Moro after his conversion did not visit mosques, and said nothing about the Muslim faith, since “when possible, I strove to refrain from observing their law”.¹³⁷ Other converts emphasized the extent of their detachment from Christian customs. Mariano de Mariano, who was forced to convert by his renegade brother, told the Inquisition: “I have not observed the Muslim ceremonies...but only I did not receive the sacraments; in all, I have not committed any other error apart from consuming meat every day and not going to confession and

cosette. Fatto questo mi vestirono con vesti di turco, et mi misero a cavallo, avanti del quale vi era un’huomo con una bandiera in mano, et altri con tamburi, et altri con trombe, et molto popolo, qual gridava: viva la fede di maometto, perche un cristiano lascia la sua legge et la sua fede, perche la legge nostra di maometto è migliore della legge de cristiani. Et in questa maniera mi girorono per tutta la città a torno a torno, facendomi li turchi riverenza per segno di allegrezza. Et io li risalutavo nell’istessa maniera”.

¹³⁴ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Francesco dal Moro”.

¹³⁵ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. “Giovanni de Cosimo”: “Et di venerdi spesse volte mi fingeva amalato per non mangiar carne con loro”.

¹³⁶ ASV, SU, b. 77, proc. “Domenico de Giorgio”: “quanto al viver, io mangiavo carne di Venere et di sabbato, come facevano tutti li altri turchi [...] di nascosto de turchi mangiavo con cristiani della carne di porcello”.

¹³⁷ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Francesco dal Moro”.

communion".¹³⁸ Under the influence of their Muslim environment, some converts strove to maintain a genuine comprehension of Christianity. Apart from keeping the custom of reciting Christian prayers that she had learnt as a child, Fiorenza Podaccataro sought to distinguish what was true of all that the Turks said about Christianity: "From all that the Turks said, I only approved what I knew the Christians did believe, such as that God is omnipotent and great, it is not permitted to lie and other similar".¹³⁹

Before the Inquisition, Christian converts recurrently presented themselves as fashioning the double identity of a crypto-Christian while they had been Muslims. By adopting an identity of "mimicry",¹⁴⁰ they conformed to the Muslim customs only outwardly but inwardly they maintained the Christian faith and desired to return to Christianity. In 1617, Giorgio Iuririch, who voluntarily had converted to Islam, said:

Although I became a Muslim outwardly...but I never moved away from the Christian religion spiritually and from the wish to become Christian and to die in Christianity. [...] It's true that I frequented the Muslim mosques and sometimes participated in their ceremonies, but I never gave credit to these with my heart... I never doubted the Christian faith and I never thought that the Muslim superstition was better than the Christian faith.¹⁴¹

The device of double identity seems to have been a common strategy, not confined to those Christian converts. The same tactic was adopted by Felice Magalotti, alias Samuel Levi, an obscure Jew from Salonica, who converted to Christianity in Ferrara, and in 1629 was arrested in Venice on suspicion of lapsing to Judaism. Earlier, at a young age, he had switched to Islam in Salonica, but as he told the Inquisitor of Ferrara his Muslim adherence was only superficial: "For all that I wore the white head-dress as the Turks do, I never believed in my heart in the law of Mohammed. Rather, I believed always in our law, and for that reason I left Turkey

¹³⁸ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. "Mariano de Mariano": "non ho fatto le ceremonie turchese... ma solamente non frequentai li santissimi sacramenti; in somma non ho commesso altro errore che di mangiar carne ogni giorno in detto tempo, e di non havermi confessato e comunicato".

¹³⁹ ASV, SU, b. 69, proc. "Fiorenza Podaccataro": [in the margin of the document] "approvavo solo delle cose che sentivo dii da Turchi quelle, che sapevo che erano tenute da christiani come che Iddio è onnipotente et grande et che non si deve dii bugie et simil altre cose".

¹⁴⁰ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics*, 15, 34.

¹⁴¹ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. "Giorgio Iuririch".

and strove to come to Venice”.¹⁴² This defense tactic was also employed by Fernao Pereira from Lisbon, who converted to Judaism in Hamburg, but claimed in his spontaneous confession before the Inquisition, he had maintained the Catholic faith in his heart.¹⁴³

The examples of two converts originating from as far as Liège and Cyprus highlight a common pattern underlining the fashioning of religious identity. The sixty-year-old Herman de Rovrè from Liège lived as a Muslim for at least thirty-five years. Having been a soldier in a French regiment in Hungary, he was captured by Tartars. Later as a Muslim, he married a Christian slave from Bogdania, who was a wet nurse in the service of an Ottoman official. De Rovrè lived with his wife and children as crypto-Christians for many years in Constantinople. He and his wife “baptized” by themselves some of their children at home, whereas he had one of his children baptized *alla greca* and another in the church of the Dominicans in Galata, Constantinople. It seems that it was relatively easy to maintain an alleged crypto-Christian identity. De Rovrè and his family visited Orthodox and Catholic churches but he abstained from confession, communion and living openly as a Christian lest his wife accused him, because she was prone to getting drunk, according to his testimony. Finally approaching a French Dominican, who also appeared as his interpreter in the Inquisition, and the French ambassador to Constantinople, De Rovrè managed to escape and reach Venice. The Dominican refused to confess De Rovrè before a formal reconciliation in the Inquisition.¹⁴⁴

Similar aspects of crypto-Christian identity are found in the story of Fiorenza Podaccataro, alias Titia, a Catholic from an upper-class Greek family of Cyprus.¹⁴⁵ Captured after the fall of Nicosia, Podaccataro married an Ottoman official in Bulgaria and had been a Muslim for twenty-two years. She told the Inquisition that all those years she had maintained her Christian faith, although immediately after capture she had declared herself a Muslim to her Muslim master in order to avoid

¹⁴² Translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 305; see above 173.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 222 – 23.

¹⁴⁴ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Herman Rovre”.

¹⁴⁵ The Podocataro (or Podaccataro) family was one of the few Greek families enjoying noble status in Venetian Cyprus: B. Arbel, “The Cypriot Nobility from the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century: A New Interpretation”, in his *Cyprus, the Franks and Venice, 13th-16th Centuries* (Aldershot, 2000), 187 – 90; Fiorenza Podaccataro was a Greek-speaking Catholic. She gave her deposition with an interpreter, as, according to the Inquisition document, she spoke neither Italian nor Latin, (though she could recite prayers in Latin).

undergoing the usual conversion rites, “the torments the other Christians suffered”, and “trampling the cross”, as she said. Secretly she recited every morning the Credo, the Paternoster and the Salve Regina sometimes in Greek, sometimes in Latin. It seems that after conversion and marriage, Podaccataro stopped being a slave, if she had ever been, and enjoyed the status of an Ottoman official’s wife with slaves in her service. Urged on by a Greek slave, Podaccataro performed a sort of baptism ritual to her children by “throwing water on their head and saying I baptize you in the name of Christ”. She went on giving her children some instruction in “invoking to Christ and the Madonna to become Christians” but she was careful not to teach them how to make the sign of the cross for fear that the Turks might have uncovered their alleged crypto-identity.¹⁴⁶

Describing their double identity, many converts used some verbal formulations that were identical with the language articulated by the Inquisition itself. Deliberately used, their expressions largely reflected the way the Inquisition operated and what the Inquisition wanted to hear; for instance, explaining the distinction between outward and inward religious adherence, some converts said that they had negated Christianity in words but they kept it in their hearts. In 1628, Paolo from Scutari said: “And although I renounced it [i.e. the Christian faith] with the mouth I did not renounce it with my heart”.¹⁴⁷ The Catholic Church accepted this distinction between superficial and inward adherence to Islam and the Inquisition itself incorporated the specific expressions – renunciation with the mouth but not in the heart - in documents and procedural manuals.¹⁴⁸

The narratives of converts were far from neutral accounts of their past. The way converts weaved the depositions suggests strategies they adopted to make their cases more compelling.¹⁴⁹ Without scrutinising the depositions the Inquisition allowed converts greater latitude in manoeuvring and showing that they fully adhered to Christianity, repenting for their error. In the following “dialogue”, the interrogated Francesco Argentino echoed the suggestive questions of the Inquisitor:

¹⁴⁶ ASV, SU, b. 69, proc. “Fiorenza Podaccataro”.

¹⁴⁷ ASV, SU, b. 86, proc. “Paolo da Scutari”

¹⁴⁸ Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*, 104 – 9.

¹⁴⁹ On converts’ depositions see xlvii; on the notion of behaviour as governed by strategies rather than rules: Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory*, 9.

Asked if in any way he believed that Mohammed was the true and major prophet and close to God, and someone could find salvation in that sect.

[*Argentino*] *answered*: No sirs, of course I do not believe it. I do not believe that Mohammed is the major and true prophet nor he is closer to god. I do not believe that in that sect anyone can find salvation.

Asked if he believes and even did believe that Jesus Christ our Saviour was not the true God, but however a prophet, as they themselves falsely assert.

[*Argentino*] *answered*: No, I do not and I have never believed what I was told about Christ our lord. But I have always believed that our saviour and Redeemer was our true god.¹⁵⁰

Aware of the procedures of the Inquisition converts reached Venice after a calculated decision. How this awareness was obtained is difficult to gauge. We get a glimpse by drawing on the case of Giulio Cesare, a Christian from Naples, who found himself captive in Seraglio (Sarajevo). Cesare remained Christian for some years and he decided to convert to Islam once assured by some other Christian slaves that if he managed to escape and reach his homeland, the Catholic Church would forgive his error.¹⁵¹ Converts and persons in captivity in Ottoman areas legitimised a strategy of deliberately embracing Islam, having been aware that outside those lands institutions of the Catholic Church would facilitate their return to Christianity.

Additional examples substantiate the various strategies with which prospective converts crafted their narratives. In his deposition of 1618, Nicolò Mandricardo, an Orthodox from the island of Zante who asked to become Catholic, moved gradually from the neutral term “Greek rite” (*rito greco*) to the term “schismatics”.¹⁵² Similarly, Giorgio Iuririch labelled Islam as “the Mohammedan superstition”.¹⁵³ Other converts followed a tactic of stressing certain aspects of their past while downplaying others. In 1633, Pietro Milenich from Cattaro structured his narrative around his Christian Orthodox past and his recognition of Catholicism as the true faith. He began his story by an emphatic repudiation of his origin:

¹⁵⁰ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. “Francesco Argentino”: the Inquisitor’s questions are found in note 75; “Respondit signori no, che non si credo. Non credo che macometto sia il maggior et vero profetta, ne più vicino a dio. Ne credo che in quella setta alcuno si possi salvare [...] Respondit questo no che non ho mai creduto quello che loro dicono intorno a Cristo signor nostro. Ma ho sempre creduto et credo, che sia vero dio nostro salvatore et Redentore”.

¹⁵¹ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Giulio Cesare”.

¹⁵² ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. “Nicolò Mandricardo”; see also 135.

¹⁵³ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. “Giorgio Iuririch”.

Having been born to a schismatic Greek father and mother and brought up into their sect, I consequently observed all that the other schismatic Greeks observe and believe; and the errors against the holy Roman Catholic and apostolic church, I believed that was the true faith. Now I realised that [the Greek rite] is not the true faith [...] so guided by God I have resolved to abandon the faith of Greeks and their errors, and to embrace the true faith of the holy Roman church.

Only at the end of his account did Milenich touch upon another aspect of his past, that he had also converted to Islam for the last seven years before reaching Venice.¹⁵⁴ Also Giorgio Iuririch capitalised on the confessional division between Catholics and Orthodox, to legitimise his conduct - a strategy that seems that have finally satisfied the officials of the Inquisition. Asked the reason why as a Muslim he plundered the Christian populations in Podolia and Wallachia, Iuririch justified his actions on the grounds that “for the most part they [i.e. those Christians] were schismatics”.¹⁵⁵

Due to the long period that they lived as Muslims, some converts occupied a peculiar position between the Muslim and Christian world, as manifested either in their linguistic skills or their knowledge and understanding of aspects of Muslim/Ottoman societies. The Neapolitan Giulio Cesare, alias Mustafâ had been in the Balkans for about twenty-three years, though for the first nine years he had not converted, but later he married a Muslim woman and obtained two children. Cesare is an example of how some converts inserted themselves between the two worlds, acting sometimes as cultural intermediaries when they narrated their lives before the Inquisition. Speaking about Seraglio (Sarajevo), the place where he stayed for years, Cesare added, to make it more comprehensible, that Seraglio was the city where eastern merchandise first reached before arriving at Spalato. Describing aspects of his life in the Muslim Balkans, Cesare used interchangeably Christian and non-Christian terms; for instance, he called the Muslim cleric before whom the conversion rites took place, “their priest”. More telling was the way Cesare calculated the years he

¹⁵⁴ ASV, SU, b. 89, proc. “Petrus Milenich”: “Essendo io nato di padre et madre greci scismatici et da loro allevato nella sua setta, ho osservato per conseguenza tutto quello che osservano li altri scismatici et quello che tengono li atri greci scismatici, et li loro errori contrari alla santa Romana chiesa cattolica et apostolica credendomi che quella fosse la vera fede. Hora conoscendo che quella non è la vera fede; quella che insegna la santa madre chiesa Romana cattolica et apostolica così da dio illuminato mi son risoluto di apprendere, et di lasciare quella de greci con li loro errori, et abbracciar questa della chiesa santa Romana, come vera”.

¹⁵⁵ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. “Giorgio Iuririch”; the Uskoks in Dalmatia employed the same rhetoric when attacking Orthodox: Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj*, 160, 189; G. Iuririch originated from Dolaz near the military border between Venetian Dalmatia and Ottoman hinterland.

lived in the Balkans: “I know that I had passed there twenty-three Easters, or Vailan as the Muslims call it”. Cesare gave his deposition without an interpreter, though he had lived in his homeland for only seven years. Nevertheless, when he described the form of abnegation he was made to recite, he said that he did not know how to render it in Italian.¹⁵⁶

On the other hand, Giovanni Godi from Vicenza, who had converted at the age of eleven and lived for about sixteen years as a Muslim, gave his deposition with an interpreter. The way he described his adherence to both religions is indicative of the identity of those converted at young age:

The first year after renouncing the holy faith I always sighed for my Christian faith, but gradually living in the Muslim way as my master did, their customs prevailed. But I have always kept the faith of Christ in my heart adoring him and reciting the paternoster and the Ave Maria.¹⁵⁷

Finally, Andrea Rossi, who was converted at the age of twenty, confessed that he had frequented the mosques in Banja Luka and observed the customs of his fellow Muslims but he had not understood their language.¹⁵⁸

It seems that no strict observance of Muslim customs in the communities where they lived, was forced on converts. The process of assimilation of converts was rather the result of the duration of their sojourn in Muslim areas or a personal choice. Converting at the age of twenty-three and living as a Muslim for three years, Domenico Lucido was an example of the process of assimilation. Despite the conversion Lucido told the Inquisitor that he had initially tried to observe the fast of Friday and Saturday, but his fellow Muslims threatened him that he insulted their religion. Failed in this, Lucido started to come to terms with his new environment. He wrote down Muslim prayers to learn them, and observed the feasts, such as the Muslim Lent, as he put it.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. “Giulio Cesare”: “perche so di haver fatto in Turchia 23 pasque, dette da loro Vailan. [...] con dir quelle parole avanti al loro prete che essi costumano (et dixit suprascripta verba more Turcarum que dixit tali occasione, que nescivit Italico idiomate explicare)”.

¹⁵⁷ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. “Giovanni Godi”: “Respondit: nel primo anno che rinegai la santa fede sospirai sempre la mia fede cristiana, ma poi in successo di tempo vivendo alla turchesca come faceva il patrone, mi prevalevo delle loro usanze. Ma però nel core sempre tenevo la fede di Nostro signore Gesù Cristo, adorandolo, e dicendo il Paternostro et l’Ave Maria”.

¹⁵⁸ ASV, SU, b. 87, proc. “Andrea Rossi”.

¹⁵⁹ ASV, SU, b. 90, proc. “Domenico Lucido”.

Some converts who seemed to have been well aware of the procedures of re-embracing Christianity through the Inquisition, sought before their appearance before the Inquisition to obtain some sort of certification from ecclesiastical or other authorities verifying their conversion to Islam, but also their aspiration to return to Christianity and their proper Christian conduct. Before the Inquisition these converts did not miss the opportunity to produce their letters of recommendation [*fede*] as further evidence of their plea. In 1591, Natale Perasto, a sailor from Cattaro, appeared in the Inquisition having already obtained letters of recommendation from a priest and the governor of Corfu.¹⁶⁰ In 1634, Mario Speri, a sailor from Livorno, also brought a *fede* from a friar, a slave in Tunis too, confirming that he had confessed Speri. Having left his Muslim fellows, Domenico de Giorgio, a carpenter in the Venetian shipyard, obtained a letter from the governor of a French fortress on an island near Sardinia. The governor had asked him to prove that he was a Christian by reciting Christian prayers.¹⁶¹ This example also suggests that there were unofficial ways for individuals, especially those who did not hesitate at living in a continuous religious border-crossing, to receive some sort of “official” identification of their religious identity in order to move freely.

For converts originating from Venice, the appearance in the Inquisition for reconciliation might have been dictated by their need to establish themselves smoothly in the life of the city.¹⁶² We can assume that captivity in Muslim lands for Venetians did not go unnoticed, let alone in cases that the converts asked for ransom funds or maintained communication with their family, such as the Venetian Domenico de Giorgio, who told the Inquisitor that he had sent letters to his family to assure them that he would escape at the first opportunity. After his return to Venice, Domenico de Giorgio was employed as a carpenter in the Venetian Arsenale, and a formal reconciliation before the Inquisition would surely facilitate his employment prospects, as Venice maintained a strict policy of admission in the Arsenale from the late sixteenth century.¹⁶³ Before the Inquisition De Giorgio was accompanied by two

¹⁶⁰ ASV, SU, b. 68, proc. “Natale Perasto”.

¹⁶¹ ASV, SU, b. 77, proc. “Domenico de Giorgio”.

¹⁶² Ritualistic reintegration into the social fabric of the Christian community and reinstatement of someone’s identity as a free Christian were central in the spectacular large-scale processions of redeemed slaves that were taking place in Italian cities: Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 183 – 88; Sarti, “Bolognesi schiavi”, 443.

¹⁶³ Davis, *Shipbuilders of the Venetian Arsenale*, 94.

other Venetians as witnesses. In most similar Inquisitorial proceedings witnesses were clerics or members of the Inquisition's personnel. The two Venetians in De Giorgio's case were not only witnesses in the legal terms prescribed by the Inquisition, but also witnesses who would verify Domenico's new identity to the community.¹⁶⁴

Similar concerns motivated individuals of non-Venetian origin who sought to establish themselves in the city. Captured at the age of ten, Julia from Hungary lived as a Muslim in Constantinople. Later in Cairo she was bought by the Venetian merchant Andrea di Alessi, with whom she lived for six years having a child. It seems that while being in the service of Di Alessi in Cairo Julia continued to live as a Muslim. After Di Alessi's death some relatives of his brought Julia and her child to Venice, where she returned to Christianity. Going to confession she was told that she should first consult the Inquisition for absolution. Before appearing in the Inquisition, Julia was instructed in Italian and Christian prayers at the home of Di Alessi's brother. Julia, the sister of Andrea di Alessi, was present during Julia's deposition confirming that the prospective convert had been well instructed.¹⁶⁵

For other converts the appearance before the Inquisition meant more than just a new identity. In 1622, Elena Carandi from Bosnia, who had been in captivity for ten years with her son, handed a letter over to the Inquisitor asking for reconciliation and the issuing of a patent that would enable her to seek alms for paying the ransom of her captive son before he was induced to conversion:

I humbly beg your most Reverend and Excellent Authority to receive me in the bosom of the holy mother Church and re-bless me for the salvation of my soul. I beg you to grant me a patent to go seeking alms for the redemption of my poor son, who lives in such a misery in the hands of those dogs because otherwise in despair he will become Muslim.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ ASV, SU, b. 77, proc. "Domenico de Giorgio".

¹⁶⁵ ASV, SU, b. 71, proc. "Giulia di Giorgio".

¹⁶⁶ ASV, SU, b. 77, proc. "Elena Carandi": "Però Prostratta supplico V. S. Illustrissima et Reverendissima degni per l'Imensa sua benignità, et effetto de soma Carità ricevermi di novo nel Grembo della santa Madre Chiesa et farmi rebenedire, perche non perda l'anima; Concedendomi per pietà Christiana Una Pattente, perche possi andar Cercando Ellemosina per il riscato di quel poviro figliolo qual vive in tanta pena nelle mani de quali Cani, perche da desperatione non venghi assentire alla pessima loro volontà, et diverti Turcho".

It is not known whether the Inquisition finally provided Carandi with a patent. However, it would be plausible to assume that her case represented a category of prospective converts, whose spontaneous confessions were not only far from just a spiritual matter but also from the need to reinstate someone's identity. How common this practice was among those lapsed Christians, who approached the Inquisition is difficult to say. The Venetian state was anxious to eliminate begging but patents that allowed begging were issued for baptized Jews.¹⁶⁷

The Inquisition in all likelihood provided reconciled converts with a certificate of their confession and readmission to Christianity. As early as 1592 the Patriarch Priuli issued a certificate for Demetrio Bagga, although for the overwhelming majority of cases no indication of such certificates exists.¹⁶⁸ Similar documents certifying baptism were given to native-born Muslims who left the Catecumeni. Antonio, alias Assam, from a village near Uskup (Skopje) insisted that the Catecumeni should provide him with a certificate of his baptism in order to join a cavalry regiment in Mestre.¹⁶⁹ However, it seems that the certificates the Inquisition gave to prospective converts became gradually an issue of concern for fraudulent use. Desiderio Scaglia's *Prattica per proceder* drew the Inquisitors' attention to the misuse of certificates, which were obtained by persons who proved to be vagabonds. According to the handbook, certificates [*attestatione autentica*] of their abjuration and reconciliation were issued for those *sponte comparenti* who had been born into heretical families. In all probability, Scaglia referred to individuals of Protestant or Calvinist background, who in the seventeenth century constituted a significant part among the *sponte comparenti*. The handbook informed the Inquisitors that the Sacred Congregation's latest instruction was that the certificates should be issued occasionally and only after scrutiny.¹⁷⁰

Among those individuals converted to Islam and later seeking reconciliation before the Venetian Inquisition two groups can be discerned: a predominant group of soldiers and mercenaries, and a second one of common sailors. Most converts from

¹⁶⁷ Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, 221 – 22; idem, *The Jews of Europe*, 252 – 53.

¹⁶⁸ ASV, SU, b. 69, proc. "Demetrio Bagga", Document dated 24 October 1592.

¹⁶⁹ ACPV, BdC, B 1616 - 1675, 4.

these groups originated from the Dalmatian coast, Greek areas and Italy. A smaller group comprised itinerant craftsmen, who moved between Italy and the Balkans. It is difficult to say how much these groups reflected the situation in the wider Mediterranean scene. Interestingly, we get the same picture from the small number of the Bolognese slaves redeemed by the Archconfraternity di Santa Maria della Neve. The number of Bolognese persons who were captured by Muslims was particularly small compared to those from other Italian areas; for the sixteenth and seventeenth century 100 to 150 persons became slaves. Among those redeemed slaves, soldiers serving mainly in the Venetian army figured predominantly; some sailors and craftsmen existed too.¹⁷¹

Facing the Inquisition many converts from the Balkans declared their profession as soldier [*miles*]. After conversion they entered the service of local Ottoman officials as soldiers or joined bands of Muslim mercenaries or even bandits.¹⁷² For years these converts wandered through the Balkans. Tommaso, alias Macomet a convert from Carlovac (Karlovac) served as a soldier for many years in Hungary.¹⁷³ Marino Zed followed for five years his master who had earlier forced him to convert.¹⁷⁴ Giorgio Iurich had a more adventurous career. Having been sold to a Vizier of the Divan, Iurich fought in a series of wars until his master died in a war in Persia. Later in a band of mercenaries Iurich earned his living by looting and plundering Christian populations along the Black Sea, in Wallachia and Podolia.¹⁷⁵

A great deal of these converts of military background originated from frontier areas: the Venetian-Ottoman military border in Dalmatia, the Habsburg Military zone (the so-called Triplex Confinium) and Bosnia.¹⁷⁶ Their lives reflected the conditions of the frontier societies they came from. From the 1570s onwards a continuous influx to Islam appears to have taken place in those areas as the result of constant turmoil caused by the raids of Uskoks and other plundering bands, and Muslim incursions on both sides of the Dalmatian frontier.¹⁷⁷ Besides, the increasing

¹⁷⁰ Mirto, "Un inedito del Seicento", 105.

¹⁷¹ Sarti, "Bolognesi schiavi", 440.

¹⁷² Conversion and military career were clearly associated in Crete after the Ottoman conquest of 1669: Greene, *A shared world*, 36 - 44.

¹⁷³ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. "Tomaso figlio di Giorgio".

¹⁷⁴ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Marino Zed".

¹⁷⁵ ASV, S.U, b. 72, proc. "Giorgio Iurich".

¹⁷⁶ For Bosnia as a frontier society: Heywood, "Bosnia Under Ottoman Rule", 34 - 9.

¹⁷⁷ Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj*, 57 - 64, 77 - 80, 83 - 5, 107 - 8.

recruitment of mercenaries and volunteers was the result of changes that took place in the Ottoman military organisation with its expansion and the rise of provincial notables, and their private militias towards the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁷⁸ Thus, two certain patterns of conversion can be discerned among Christian converts of military background who appeared in Venice; those from frontier zones and converts from northern Albanian areas where conversion intensified from the late sixteenth century onwards.¹⁷⁹

The conditions under which those converted from Christianity lived in Ottoman mercenary bands and militias varied. Some individuals lapsed to Islam at their own initiative, while others lived as Muslims without having undergone any conversion rite. Domenico Benvich lived as a Christian for two years after captivity.¹⁸⁰ Without having been forced to conversion for a year after his capture near Modon in the Morea, Constantino Rizzo from Crete embraced Islam at his own initiative.¹⁸¹ Some converts lived relatively isolated from their Muslim companions. Although participating in the religious rites of his Muslim companions, Martino Velincovich, alias Ossiman, from Koprivnica told the Inquisition that he had understood neither the practices nor the language of those Muslims with whom he had lived for about eight years.¹⁸²

Besides, many Christian converts maintained contacts with their families. After having lived as Muslim for five years and wandered in the Balkans as a soldier, Marino Zed returned to his hometown where with the help of his father he embarked for Venice.¹⁸³ Having been taken from his family at the age of four and lived as Muslim for fifteen years Domenico Benvich returned to his home in Albona and later fled to Venice.¹⁸⁴ After twenty-years of service in the Ottoman army and irregular bands throughout the Balkans, Giorgio Iuririch returned to his homeland, where some Christian relatives of his helped him pass to Sebenico and finally reach Venice.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁸ S. Faroqi, "Politics and socio-economic change in the Ottoman Empire of the later sixteenth century", in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. M. Kunt and C. Woodhead (London, 1995), 97 – 8.

¹⁷⁹ A. Zeljazkova, "Ottoman-Turkic colonization in Albania and some aspects of the ensuing demographic changes", *Études balkaniques*, 27, 2 (1984): 67 – 84.

¹⁸⁰ ASV, SU, b. 86, proc. "Domenico Benvich".

¹⁸¹ ASV, SU, b. 86, proc. "Constantino Rizzo".

¹⁸² ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Martino Velincovich".

¹⁸³ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Marino Zed".

¹⁸⁴ ASV, SU, b. 86, proc. "Domenico Benvich".

¹⁸⁵ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. "Giorgio Iuririch".

Thus, despite its occasional violent nature, conversion did not necessarily signify an abrupt abandonment of someone's links with past. Some converts, such as Marino Zed from Banja Luca and Pietro Aderni from Sebenico, even after conversion continued to live for sometime in their hometowns in the houses of their Muslim masters.¹⁸⁶

The links many converts maintained with their family and Christian communities can be seen as a feature of their identity standing between their pre- and after conversion condition. Also a consideration of their religious conviction after years of association with their Muslim fellows reveals some aspects of their identity. Several examples of converts across the Mediterranean suggest the development of idiosyncratic religious cultures and beliefs by incorporating elements from Islam and Christianity.¹⁸⁷ Beyond that, some additional cases illustrate the various ways converts perceived their former and new religion. Demetrio Bagga indicated that he stood between enmity and some sort of reservation towards Christianity before taking the decision to revert to it.

I have lived in the Muslim way for all that period, and I did not like either the Christians or their faith; but I have never done anything bad to the Christian churches, or the priests, or the icons of the saints, although it is true that I swore at them and I spoke ill of them. Finally, five months ago I started to repent and understand my misconduct in abandoning the Christian faith, the faith of my father and ancestors.¹⁸⁸

On the other hand, many converts declared that while being Muslims they lived as crypto-Christians.¹⁸⁹ The way converts fashioned their crypto-Christian identity varied. Martino Velincovich said that he had been under the constant pressure of his fellow Muslims to declare Mohammed the prophet of God. However, he remained firm to his Christian beliefs. He told the Inquisition:

¹⁸⁶ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Marino Zed"; for similar remarks, Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj*, 34 – 5.

¹⁸⁷ Bennassar, "Frontières religieuses entre Islam et chrétienté", 72 – 78.

¹⁸⁸ ASV, SU, b. 69, proc. "Demetrio Bagga": "Io ho vissuto tutto questo tempo alla Turchesca, et non amavo ne li christiani ne la fede loro ma non ho gia fatto mai alcun ingiuria alle chiese de christiani ne alli sacerdoti o imagine de santi, e ben vero, che nel ragionare io li biastemavo et dicevo male, finalmente gia cinque mesi ho cominciato a rivedermi et conoscer il mio error in haver abbandonato la fede de cristiano et la fede che hanno tenuto mio padre et li mei vecchii".

¹⁸⁹ On crypto-Christians, see: S. Skendi, "Crypto – Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans", *Slavic Review*, 26, 2 (1967): 227 – 46; however, as G. Duijzings has shown, the existence and continuity of collective crypto-Christianity is problematic, Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics*, 86 – 105.

I have never believed that Mohammed was the prophet of God [...] But I have always believed that Christ our Lord is a true God and all that holds the Holy Mother Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church under which I was born and brought up.

He stressed that the only concession he had made to his new religion was the observance of Muslim dietary customs contrary to those of a Christian.¹⁹⁰

Other converts did not share this firm adherence and understanding of the difference between the two religions. The following dialogue took place between the Inquisitor and Tommaso from Carlovac:

He was asked if he had believed that Mohammed was the true prophet of God and as a result that his [Mohammed's] Law was good.

[*Tommaso*] *answered*: No sirs, I have never believed that Mohammed was a true prophet and that his Law was good, as I said before.

He was asked if he had believed that Christ our saviour was not only a real human being but also a true God.

[*Tommaso*] *answered*: I would not know what to say about this; I only know that in Turkey those Turks said that Jesus Christ was in no way a true God, and that our Law was false; however I preserved my devotion and trust for our faith, although I did not know the articles of it [Christian faith] and I did not give them [Turks] any trust but I maintained my wish stronger.¹⁹¹

In answering the initial suggestive question, Tommaso echoed the Inquisitor. But the next answer is revealing: despite his unawareness of Christian tenets, the negative image of Christianity that Tommaso received from the people he associated with, fortified his religious (crypto-) adherence. The example of Tommaso is indicative of a category of converts, especially those converted at a young age. Paraphrasing a well-known description given for the Marranos, some converts to Islam can be seen

¹⁹⁰ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Martino Velincovich".

¹⁹¹ ASV, SU, b. 97, proc. "Tomaso figlio de Georgio": "Interrogatus: se ha creduto che Macometto, sia vero profetta di dio, et per conseguenza la sua legge sia buona. Respondit: signori no, che non ho mai creduto che manometto sia vero profetta, et che la sua legge sia buona, come ho detto di sopra. Interrogatus: se ha creduto che Cristo salvator nostro sia non solamente vero huomo, ma anco vero dio. Respondit: io in questo non saprei che dire, solo che in turchia si diceva da quei turchi, che Giesu Cristo non fosse altramente vero dio, et che la nostra legge fosse falsa ma io conservando divotione et credenza verso la nostra fede, se ben non sapevo li articoli di quella, non gli davo fede alcuna, conservando tanto più quel desiderio che ho detto di sopra"; see also the "dialogue" in 203.

as “Muslims without faith and Christians without knowledge, though Christians by desire”.¹⁹²

Beyond the alleged purpose of returning to Christianity, many lapsed Christians reached Venice as a result of their military profession. As mercenaries they sought employment in the Venetian army. Already from the late fifteenth century Venice filled the ranks of light cavalry, the *stradioti*, and infantry with mercenaries from the Balkans, mainly Christians but also Muslims.¹⁹³ Appearing before the Inquisition some converts were taking a necessary step that would facilitate their employment prospects. The stories of Giorgio Iuririch and Paolo from Scutari (Shkodër) illustrate the relation between mercenary career and fashioning of religious identity. Having already found employment in the *capelletti* force, the light cavalry of police responsibilities, Iuririch appeared before the Inquisition to leave behind his Muslim past. He anxiously pressed the Inquisitor to conclude his case quickly because the next day he had to depart with his companions for Venice’s northern territory.¹⁹⁴ Paolo from Scutari approached the Inquisition to renounce his Muslim past having already completed a six-year-service in the Venetian army.¹⁹⁵

Turning to native-born Muslims who appeared in the Venetian ecclesiastical authorities to become Christians, a similar pattern of soldiers and mercenaries emerges. In 1616, a group of three Muslims, Zaffer from Rhodes, Ali and Gheg from Albania entered the Catecumeni. After having been catechised and baptised they departed for a town to the north of Venice in order to serve in the cavalry.¹⁹⁶ Four former Muslims departed as soldiers for Crete in 1645 at the time of the Ottoman-Venetian war. As a group they had also entered the Catecumeni.¹⁹⁷

Several individuals already served the Venetian forces as mercenaries while having been Muslims. After conversion they just returned to their former tasks but possibly with higher prospects as Christians. Paolo, alias Mucchio, from Delvino left the Catecumeni and returned to a band of mercenaries in Verona, Andrea, the former

¹⁹² The phrase belongs to Carl Gebhardt and its original form is “a Catholic without faith and a Jew without knowledge, though a Jew by desire”: translated in Pullan, *The Jews of Europe*, 205.

¹⁹³ M. E. Mallett and J. R. Hale, *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State. Venice c. 1400 to 1617* (Cambridge, 1984), 73 – 4, 317 – 18, 376 – 77, 447 – 60.

¹⁹⁴ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. “Giorgio Iuririch”; on the *capelletti* force: Mallett and Hale, *The Military Organization*, 377.

¹⁹⁵ ASV, SU, b. 86, proc. “Paolo da Scutari”.

¹⁹⁶ ACPV, BdC, B 1616 - 1675, 2.

¹⁹⁷ ACPV, BdC, B 1616 - 1675, 19.

Muslim Veli from Scutari, and Antonio, alias Assam from Constantinople returned to the galleys. All had earlier served in the same posts as Muslims.¹⁹⁸

Muslim converts frequently conflicted with the officials of the Catecumeni about the military profession that they intended to follow. In 1619, Francesco, alias Soliman from Salonica refused to accept the officials' admonition to wait until they found him a job as a craftsman. Francesco insisted on joining the armed forces and finally went to nearby Padua as a soldier.¹⁹⁹ The same disagreement arose with Antonio, alias Assam, from a village near Uskup (Skopje). Antonio had found a post in the cavalry in Mestre, outside Venice, and insisted that the officials should provide him with a certificate of his baptism in order to join the regiment.²⁰⁰ The attitudes of converts with military background came into conflict with the policy of the Catecumeni which was anxious about the future behaviour of the neophytes and suspected that military service might put their moral standards into danger. But Muslim converts, who had spent most of their lives as soldiers and mercenaries, were more than reluctant to abandon their profession.

Mercenaries constituted the predominant and most detectable group among the Christian and Muslim converts. Many of these individuals suggest the figure of a low-ranking mercenary, whose identity was profoundly shaped through a continual crossing of boundaries both geographical and religious. Originating from both urban and rural areas, in their overwhelming majority illiterate,²⁰¹ ripped away from their families and homelands or living at their own initiative in a permanent state of insecurity, these mercenaries formed groups of socially marginal people and developed a distinctive form of subculture. Contrary to other early-modern marginal groups, such as vagrants and vagabonds that have been considered as having been passive in their marginalisation,²⁰² the groups of mercenaries do appear to have developed unique value systems. They reacted against their degradation and exclusion by appropriating and overturning the dominant religious ideology

¹⁹⁸ ACPV, BdC, B 1616 - 1675, 4, 10; on Muslims from the Balkans serving in the Venetian army, Mallett and Hale, *The Military Organization*, 317 – 18.

¹⁹⁹ ACPV, BdC, B 1616 - 1675, 4.

²⁰⁰ ACPV, BdC, B 1616 - 1675, 4.

²⁰¹ Their illiteracy is attested in the way they signed the documents of their depositions; they used the sign of a cross for signature. The notary also wrote down that the person would sign by a cross, as he did not know writing. A few exceptions existed, such as Constantino Rizzo from Crete, who put his signature in Italian written in Greek letters.

²⁰² R. Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994), 181.

structured around the strict division between Islam and Christianity. Through a skilfully articulated rhetoric, imbued with religious fervour, these mercenaries blurred religious boundaries and adapted their religious identities to their material needs.²⁰³

A close examination of these mercenaries' movements before and after reaching Venice, and the language they used in order to describe their identity exemplifies the process of appropriation and adaptation. Nicolò Givancia said that he decided to revert to Christianity when his Muslim master went to Mecca as a pilgrim.²⁰⁴ Likewise, Giorgio Iuririch said that after the death of his master in a war in Persia he lived by plundering Christian populations in the Balkans but he "always had in mind to abandon [plundering] and live in my old Christian religion". Before departing for Venice, during his stay in Sebenico he took care to receive "some instruction on the Christian faith and life", thus preparing his return to Christianity.²⁰⁵ Just within a few days after their arrival in Venice most converts appeared before the Catholic ecclesiastical authorities. They were accompanied by persons from the Balkans living in Venice, who assisted them in the Inquisition and the Catecumeni as interpreters.²⁰⁶

In the early modern Mediterranean, conflict and strict boundaries coexisted with religious border crossing and hybridisation. As the desecration of shrines and churches and other sorts of ritual damage and spoilage was a standard feature of the Christian-Muslim conflict,²⁰⁷ a cave dedicated to the Madonna on the island of Lampedusa received offerings from both Christian and Muslim seamen, fishermen and pirates.²⁰⁸ Ambiguity and fragmentation is also illustrated in communities and pilgrimages in the Ottoman Balkans, where Christian and Muslim customs

²⁰³ Similar examples of mercenaries' conduct are found in other Inquisitions too. Before the Inquisition of Malta some soldiers of Jewish origin confessed their continual movements between the three religions: F. Ciappara, "The Roman Inquisition and the Jews in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Malta", in *Le Inquisizioni cristiane e gli ebrei, Atti dei convegni Lincei* (Rome, 2003), 462. I would like to thank Frans Ciappara for giving me a copy of his paper.

²⁰⁴ ASV, SU, b. 98, proc. "Nicolò Givancia".

²⁰⁵ ASV, SU, b. 72, proc. "Giorgio Iuririch".

²⁰⁶ It would be plausible to say that the operation of local networks was underway, although the documentation does not support this assertion.

²⁰⁷ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 40 – 1.

overlapped and religious borders blurred.²⁰⁹ Christian-Muslim relations in the Mediterranean, whether peaceful or conflictual, were more multifaceted and subtle than the dichotomous labels suggest; for instance, viewing slave-taking as a predominant Muslim practice obscures that besides a million Christians enslaved by the Barbary Muslims between 1530 – 1780, according to a recent estimate, stand at least five hundred thousand Muslim slaves in Italy from the early sixteenth to the late eighteenth century.²¹⁰

In this context, the presence of Christian and Muslim converts in the Venetian ecclesiastical authorities suggests the ways some subaltern groups coped with their precarious position. For those individuals caught in the maelstrom of Christian-Muslim conflict, coping with conversion and its consequences seems to have been an individualistic issue, as even the great majority of those from Italy, who fell victims of conversion by force, did not fulfil the requirements of finding redemption through the slave redemption agencies because either they did not connect clearly to an Italian state or they were not among the priorities of their native communities; let alone all those Christians who lacked the connections, nationality and religion (e.g. non-Catholics) to get on the redemption lists of ransoming agencies or receive assistance from the Trinitarians and Mercedarians.²¹¹ One has to consider the Venetian agency, which operated on a very selective basis; in 1624, for instance, the Venetian government commissioned the Dragoman Giovanni Battista Salvago to negotiate the redemption of Venetian subjects, captives on the Barbary Coast. The Collegio instructed Salvago to pay particular attention to the ransom of slaves who had been employed in the Venetian Arsenale and were then employed in the construction of vessels for corsairs.²¹²

The individual cases discussed here, with the mercenaries and soldiers as the example *par excellence*, exemplify not only the malleability of religious boundaries but also the “conjunctural” nature of identities and the strategies of survival

²⁰⁸ Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*, 15 – 6; see the remarks in P. Burke, “Civilizations and Frontiers: Anthropology of the Early Modern Mediterranean”, in *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences, Testing the Limits of Braudel's Mediterranean*, ed. J. A. Marino (Kirkville, Mo., 2002), 123 – 45.

²⁰⁹ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics*, 103.

²¹⁰ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 23 – 4; Sarti, “Bolognesi schiavi”, 450.

²¹¹ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 112 – 13.

²¹² Letter dated 14 October 1624: G. B. Salvago, “*Africa overo Barbaria*” *Relazione al Doge di Venezia sulle reggenze di Algeri e di Tunisi del Dragomanno Gio. Batta Salvago (1625)*, ed. A. Sacerdoti (Padua, 1937), 7 – 8.

subordinate groups adopted in conditions of socio-cultural alienation and existential insecurity.²¹³ The traffic of obscure individuals along the Mediterranean, with Venice as one of their destinations, fit into an emerging image of the Mediterranean after the 1570s, as a world with increasing borderland porousness, where the marauder and the renegade, and more generally the dissimulator best survived.²¹⁴

²¹³ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics*, 18, 34 – 6, 86 – 105; H. Kamen, “Strategies of Survival: Minority Cultures in the Western Mediterranean”, in Marino, *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences*, 205 – 22.

²¹⁴ D. Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), 161.

Conclusion

It has been a topos in recent scholarship to question the two dominant hermeneutical paradigms of “Counter Reformation” and “Catholic Reform” as not properly encompassing the religious and ecclesiastical history of early modern Italy. Counter Reformation stands for Catholic reactionary initiatives enacted against the Protestant threat, whereas the Catholic Reform view emphasizes continuities with late medieval initiatives for reform, which shaped the background for both Protestant and early sixteenth-century Catholic reformers.¹ Also, perhaps more valuably, Catholic Reform often refers to post-Tridentine practices and initiatives which were not strictly repressive but were shaped by ideals of correction and re-education.²

Some common traits, however, underlie both paradigms, that is social discipline and confessionalization spearheaded, as has often been maintained, by the Inquisition. The Inquisition, either seen as pure Counter Reformation initiative or as combining the characteristics of Catholic Reform, was primarily a disciplining apparatus. Confessionalization and social discipline were in the core of inquisitorial activity. However, here lies the risk of overemphasizing confessionalization and social discipline, and taking both notions as far as some scholars have done by seeing

¹ The Catholic Reform approach goes back to the seminal essays of Hubert Jedin, with emphasis on institutional aspects, and of Henry Outram Evenett focusing on spirituality: H. Jedin, “Catholic Reformation or Counter-Reformation?”, in *The Counter-Reformation. The Essential Readings*, ed. and trans. by D. M. Luebke (Malden, Mass., and Oxford, 1999), 21 – 45; H. Outram Evenett, *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation. The Birkbeck Lectures in Ecclesiastical History Given in the University of Cambridge in May 1951, by the late H. Outram Evenett*, ed. with a postscript by J. Bossy (Cambridge and London, 1968); however, see the criticism of the continuity between late medieval initiatives and Catholic Reform: E. G. Gleason, “Catholic Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and Papal Reform in the Sixteenth Century”, in Brady, Oberman, Tracy, *Handbook of European History*, vol. 2, *Visions, Programs, and Outcomes*, 318 – 26; John’ O’Malley has proposed the more neutral term “Early Modern Catholicism”: J. O’Malley, *Trent and All That. Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2000), 126 – 27.

² This view of Catholic Reform in relation to Counter-Reformation is often epitomised in the juxtaposition of the episcopal policies of Carlo Borromeo and Gabriele Paleotti. See the summary in Black, *Church, Religion and Society*, 67 – 73.

them as underlying principles which formed the basis of nineteenth-century developments in the history of Italy. Reflecting Jean Delumeau's and John Bossy's views on "acculturation" and "Christianization", Wolfgang Reinhard saw both the Reformation and the subsequent developments in the Catholic Church as sharing confessionalization and social discipline, a process which produced homogeneity, discipline, pure doctrine, individuality and subsequent obedience to state authority which made religion part of its foundation. As a result "confessionalization' made an important contribution to the growth of the modern state in Europe".³ In this light, through an approach initially developed for Central Europe, the religious developments in Italy after the Council of Trent and especially in the seventeenth century (a period which earlier historiography often rejected as "decadent" in sharp contrast to the Renaissance) were regarded as playing a formative role in the process towards modernity. "Society after 'Confessionalization' was certainly more 'modern' than before", as Reinhard put it. In a similar fashion, Adriano Prosperi's massive study has highlighted the process of conquering individuals' conscience through the Inquisition, the confessional and the missions.⁴

The concepts of confessionalization and social discipline have certain advantages for a *longue durée* approach to early modern Italian religious history since they encapsulate the Catholic Reform and Counter Reformation paradigm as inextricably related. However, Anne Jacobson Schutte, who also favours this approach, aptly warns:

yet the paradigms of confessionalization and social discipline have certain drawbacks. They look too far forward toward nineteenth- and twentieth-century phenomena [...] They present the temptation to draw unsophisticated global inferences about 'success' or 'failure'. They entail, furthermore, the dubious assumption that cultural change

³ J. Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire. A New View of the Counter-Reformation*, with an introduction by J. Bossy, trans. J. Moiser (London, 1977); J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985); W. Reinhard, "Pressures towards Confessionalization? Prolegomena to a Theory of the Confessional Age", in *The German Reformation. The Essential Readings*, ed. C. Scott Dixon (Oxford, 1999), 172 – 92 (first appeared in German in 1983); idem, "Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State: A Reassessment", *Catholic Historical Review*, 75 (1989): 383 – 405, esp. 393; for an application of the concept of social discipline in the German context, where it was initially developed as a meaningful approach, R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation. Central Europe 1550-1750* (London, 1989).

⁴ Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*; in the same trend see among others, G. Zarri, "Disciplina regolare e pratica di coscienza: le virtù e i comportamenti sociali in comunità femminili (secc. XVI-XVIII)", in Prodi, *Disciplina dell'anima*, 257 – 78; eadem, "Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana: Un percorso di ricerca", in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo. Studi e testi a stampa*, ed. G. Zarri (Rome, 1996), 5 – 19.

moves in only one direction: from top to bottom. Privileging initiatives imposed from above, scholars operating in terms of confessionalization and social discipline tend to depict ordinary people (both layfolk and low-level clerics) as an undifferentiated mass, potentially capable of following orders but more likely to exhibit stubborn, 'backward' resistance to them.⁵

Some recent studies clearly recognize the limitations of the social discipline approach and give a more complicated picture even for the strongholds of the Counter Reformation, such as the archdiocese of Milan from the years of Carlo Borromeo to the early 1630s,⁶ with discipline not only being un-linear but also developing through confrontation, accommodation and negotiation.⁷ On the wider front, depending on the emphasis placed on social discipline and confessionalization, different pictures of the religious developments in early modern Italy emerge; to a monolithic and disciplined Church and society standing in the heart of a gloomy and decadent Italian scene, one might juxtapose the existence of many Churches and a sense of diversity arguing that by shifting our focus and examples a more nuanced picture can be produced.⁸

The overemphasis on discipline as emanated solely by the authorities makes the concept less workable and reduces its analytical potential. Some recent studies emphasize that even before the institutional reforms of the Council of Trent there was a renewed spirituality among the lower classes, especially in the first half of the sixteenth century, fostered by social changes and the impact of wars (until 1559). According to John Martin, "the Tridentine Church was as much a symptom as a cause of a new emphasis on social discipline [...] the history of Catholicism after

⁵ A. Jacobson Schutte, "Religion, Spirituality, and the Post-Tridentine Church", in *Early Modern Italy 1550-1796*, ed. J. A. Marino (Oxford, 2002), 126.

⁶ W. de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul. Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden and Boston, 2000); for an interesting discussion on the way discipline and confessionalization crossed the boundaries between Borromean Milan and Calvinist Geneva: W. de Boer, "Calvin and Borromeo: A Comparative Approach to Social Discipline", in *Early Modern Catholicism. Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.*, ed. K. M. Comerford and H. M. Pabel (Toronto, 2001), 84 – 96.

⁷ See the emphasis on appropriation and negotiation between authorities and ordinary people: A. Torre, "Politics Cloaked in Worship. State, Church and Local Power in Piedmont 1570-1770", *Past and Present*, 134 (1992): 42 – 92; idem, "Faith's Boundaries: Ritual and Territory in Rural Piedmont in the Early Modern Period", in Terpstra, *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, 243 – 61; however, it should be noted that some early exponents of the social discipline approach, such as Reinhard, have generally dismissed ordinary people's agency against authorities' reform and directives: Reinhard, "Disciplinamento sociale, confessionalizzazione", 120 – 21.

⁸ On the first view, see: G. Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy, 1550-1800. Three Seasons in European History* (Basingstoke, 2000), 120 – 35, 367 – 70; on the second view: Black, *Church, Religion and Society*.

Trent, though shaped by doctrinal and institutional reforms, was above all a protracted process of negotiations and renegotiations over access to the sacred (and to power) among disparate social groups”.⁹ In this light, a sense of discipline can be associated with renewed spirituality among ordinary people. William Hudon points out the necessity of recognizing “that the society as a whole – not just ecclesiastical and governmental elites – perceived the necessity and usefulness of such disciplining”.¹⁰ Quite provocatively reversing a dominant argument on early modern Italian religious history, summarized in the “defeat of Italian people”, Simon Ditchfield argues for “a remarkable popular victory”.¹¹ More moderately Keith Luria writes: “religious change proved to be a two-way street. People adopted new ideas, practices, and symbols from the church, but adapted them to their own purposes. The church adopted the innovations of religious creativity from below [...] and adapted them to its aims”.¹²

As its two major successive preoccupations, reform ideas and magical arts, suggest, the Venetian Inquisition’s operation, from its establishment in 1547 until the mid – or late seventeenth century, encapsulates the notions of Catholic Reform and Counter Reformation and their implications as the two sides of the same coin, implicitly bound together by the disciplining “project”. The preoccupation with reform ideas until the 1580s reflects the tribunal’s policy towards an active suppression of religious dissent, whereas the subsequent concern with magical arts and superstition could be better seen as an attempt to correct and purify individuals’ religiosity from beliefs and practices that the post-Tridentine Church deemed unorthodox and unacceptable.

By examining secondary offences, crypto-Judaism, crypto-Islam and reconciliation of converts, the Thesis sought to contribute to the study of the Venetian Inquisition from the viewpoint of “local knowledge”, as discussed by Simon Ditchfield in a recent review of early modern Italian religious history.¹³ The close examination of specific cases allowed us to go further and see the two

⁹ J. J. Martin, “Religion, Renewal, and Reform in the Sixteenth Century”, in Marino, *Early Modern Italy*, 30 – 9, 46 – 7.

¹⁰ W. V. Hudon, “Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy. Old Questions, New Insights”, *The American Historical Review*, 101, 3 (1996): 802.

¹¹ S. Ditchfield, “‘In Search of Local Knowledge’. Rewriting Early Modern Italian Religious History”, *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 19 (1998): 295.

¹² K. P. Luria, “‘Popular Catholicism’ and the Catholic Reformation”, in Comerford and Pabel, *Early Modern Catholicism*, 116.

¹³ Ditchfield, “In Search of Local Knowledge”, 255 – 96, esp. 259, 286 – 87, 294.

dominant paradigms at work: coercion and reconciliation. A more localized view of discipline (reflecting Michel de Certeau's view on "appropriation" and Michel Foucault's "governmentality"¹⁴) encapsulated a more reciprocal relation between the institution and the ordinary people through negotiation rather than conflict and clear demarcation lines. The exercise of power and discipline through the Inquisition and the process of othering revealed the agency of ordinary people as dominant actors beyond the authorities' disciplinary initiatives.

Despite occasional divergent views, the Venetian Inquisition was a joint effort and compromise of Roman initiatives and the concerns of the host state, as Rome needed sufficient secular support and the Venetian government sought to invest its anxiety and action against unorthodox and deviant beliefs and practices with ecclesiastical authority. But beyond the major targets which were also common in other areas of Italy, in another sense of Simon Ditchfield's "local knowledge", certain aspects of the operation of the Venetian Inquisition pertained and became embedded in the local context. The Inquisition cases involving crypto-Jewish and crypto-Muslim practices and reconciliation to the Catholic Church reflected the position of Venice as a place inevitably open to the Mediterranean world. The political and economic aspiration and orientation of the Venetian ruling elite in the Mediterranean affairs made the city a transit place attracting people who did not adhere to Venice's dominant religion.

The Inquisition operated in a period when Venice's cosmopolitan character became more apparent. The Venetian authorities sought to accommodate economic pragmatism with unequivocal Catholic commitment and, drawing on its colonial experience, elaborated on the presence of non-Catholic foreign groups by providing specific solutions; initiated with the Jewish Ghettos in 1516 and 1541, the officially established segregated residence of non-Christian groups came into being, a pattern which was reconfirmed with the Fondaco dei Turchi in 1621 when the Muslim presence grew and became more permanent. The presence of other non-Catholic groups, such as Levantine Christians, was semiofficially defined. The Inquisition had an important role to play in the Venetian local context by vigilantly guarding, together with the secular authorities, the boundaries that defined Otherness amidst the dominant Catholic population and in cracking down on transgressors. Finally,

¹⁴ See Introduction, xxxix.

from Venice's transient nature sprang the presence of obscure individuals, who sought to secure themselves and transform their life by the Inquisition's ratification of their religious identity.

The witnesses' depositions and the interrogations offer new insights into the world of Venetian parishes and neighbourhoods and the Inquisition's activities, and they are important descriptions of social and cultural norms and agency among ordinary people and of a process of confrontation, gradual awareness and negotiation. The depositions have provided the starting point for an analysis of how Venetians defined proper conduct and deviance. Nevertheless, it should be noted that it might be risky to take for granted that witnesses' accounts reflected perceptions of deviance at a larger social level. However, these testimonies are among the few sources that allow some glimpses into the world of ordinary people. In this light, Anne Jacobson Schutte, judging by twelve cases of feigned holiness, most of them judged by the Venetian Inquisition in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, has argued that as a result of an efficient campaign of social discipline and confessionalization seventeenth-century witnesses appeared to have been more aware of distinguishing "false saints".¹⁵ However, in the cases discussed in the Thesis the results of the authorities' discourse of discipline and confessionalization do not appear so obvious to discern.

At the witnesses' disposal there were certain criteria of Otherness provided by the Church and the state. But these criteria were insufficient and witnesses through their interaction with suspicious individuals and families inevitably drew on a wider range of signs, from private customs to behaviour norms that were open to public scrutiny. Witnesses relied on signs of crypto-Judaism that mainly sprang from someone's negligence to observe what a good Catholic was required to do (as in eating customs and fasting, proper conduct in public, Christian piety) but occasionally they offered pieces of evidence that supposedly indicated genuine Jewish practices (as in observing customs which were regarded as Jewish, associating with Jews, being favourable to Jewish beliefs). Many vague depositions and some more refined and thorough reports on crypto-Jews came from both the laity and members of the clergy.

¹⁵ Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints*, 222 – 28.

Witnesses had different preoccupations with different aspects of Judaism. Obviously the Jews of the Ghetto and their position in the Catholic city drew more attention, with the conversion of Jews stirred by the Church's and state's rhetoric and public spectacle, and the fear of the neophytes' alleged perfidy. Marranism was probably a more marginal concern, with Spanish and Portuguese witnesses vigilant against its manifestations. Some vague reports were given for the word *Marrano*. Some witnesses interchangeably used the words *Marrano* and *Lutheran* to denote a bad Catholic, and others referred to Spanish and Portuguese people as *Marranos* without a hint at religious deviance. Nevertheless from the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century a certain trend in awareness of Marranism is discerned in witnesses' depositions. Gradually reports became more parish-bound and indicated the presence of alleged *Marranos* in the parishes and neighbourhoods nearby the Ghetto. The clearest evidence of this trend came in the mid-1580s when the rumours about the De Nis family crystallised into hostile depositions, full of concrete evidence for their misconduct, which led to the family's arrest and trial. After that, in later cases witnesses continued to identify the presence of *Marranos* with the areas around the Ghetto.

Some more thorough depositions were given on offences involving illicit relations between Muslims and Christians, apostasy of former Muslims turned Christians and crypto-Muslim practices. First appearing in the 1580s such testimonies came from Venetians and Levantines who sojourned in Venice. Although no official definition of the Muslim Other was provided by the authorities, as was the case with the Jewish headgear, and Muslims were the last to appear in Venice as a recognised group, the witnesses were seemingly more aware of customs that they identified as Muslim. This suggests that the collective imagery of the Muslim Other, even at the level of everyday life, was better equipped. The Muslims personified in the Ottoman Turks not only were the infidels, the enemies of faith, but also the enemies of Venice's sovereignty. Apart from the authorities' anti-Turkish rhetoric, an ever expanding literature on the Turks from the second half of the sixteenth century supplied information, stereotyped and greatly popularised specific "images" of them.

At the same time, a process of familiarisation and learning was underway in the Inquisition tribunal. From 1549 when Francisco Olivier, the first defendant of *Marrano* origin came before the tribunal, but the Inquisitor strove to tailor his offence

into already known categories of misconduct overlooking Olivier's New Christian identity and finally punished him as a Jew; through to the late 1580s, when the trial of the De Nis family took place, the tribunal gradually standardised the offence of Iberian crypto-Judaism with the definition provided in Paul IV's crucial decree in 1556. Over the years the Inquisitors' approach became more rigid and their practice more detailed and standardised leaving the defendants less leeway to manoeuvre, as Tristao Costa had attempted to do in 1555. In the tribunal's discourse the defendants' ancestral past counted more than their conduct. The developments that took place in *processi* involving Iberian crypto-Jews culminated in the crypto-Muslim *processi* of the first half of the seventeenth century, where the Inquisitor faithfully relied on the already established practice and unambiguously determined the offences under investigation.

But the gradual rigidity was accompanied by adaptability manifested mainly in sentencing policy, which ranged from punishment, if as punishment one considers only corporal penalties, to coercive re-education of offenders. For inquisitorial authority some identities were negotiable, depending on the defendants' guilt and collaboration. This was most evident in the Inquisitor's and other clerics' persistent effort to "correct" Felipe de Nis and his family, after their judaizing was established, and bring them back to the Church, and in the carefully defined sentences the tribunal passed on the three Spanish crypto-Muslims in 1631.

As the tribunal gradually defined Marranism and crypto-Muslim practices and standardised its procedure on these misconducts, another offence came under its jurisdiction, that of conciliation of former converts to Islam, which confirmed the wider appeal of the Inquisition in the Venetian society and the same time reversed the typical long-established inquisitorial procedure. In a period when religious and secular authorities took special interest in defining individuals' identity more clearly and firmly, and inculcating them with certain moral values and behaviour patterns, groups of obscure individuals from Italy and across the Mediterranean, took advantage of the Church's orientation to win souls. They manipulated the repressive or correcting procedure of the Inquisition (as the native-born Muslims did with the Catecumeni) by giving appropriately woven accounts of their life, transformed their personal circumstance and made new identities and allegiances. In a sense they brought again into the Inquisition's discourse and practice some of the obscurities that the tribunal had earlier sought to clarify.

The offences discussed here point out the manifold aspects and the “latent possibilities” of the Venetian Inquisition’s activity from the mid-sixteenth to the mid- or late seventeenth century. The relation and cooperation between the Inquisition and certain groups of Venice’s populace was more reciprocal than generally assumed. The tribunal and witnesses were on a learning and familiarising process as they sought to clarify unorthodox and un-Christian behaviour which both deemed unacceptable. For both certain deviant identities were negotiable. The Inquisition by representing authority edified and directed the public’s attention to certain offences and, in their turn, witnesses shaped the Inquisition’s investigations through their accusations and depositions.

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